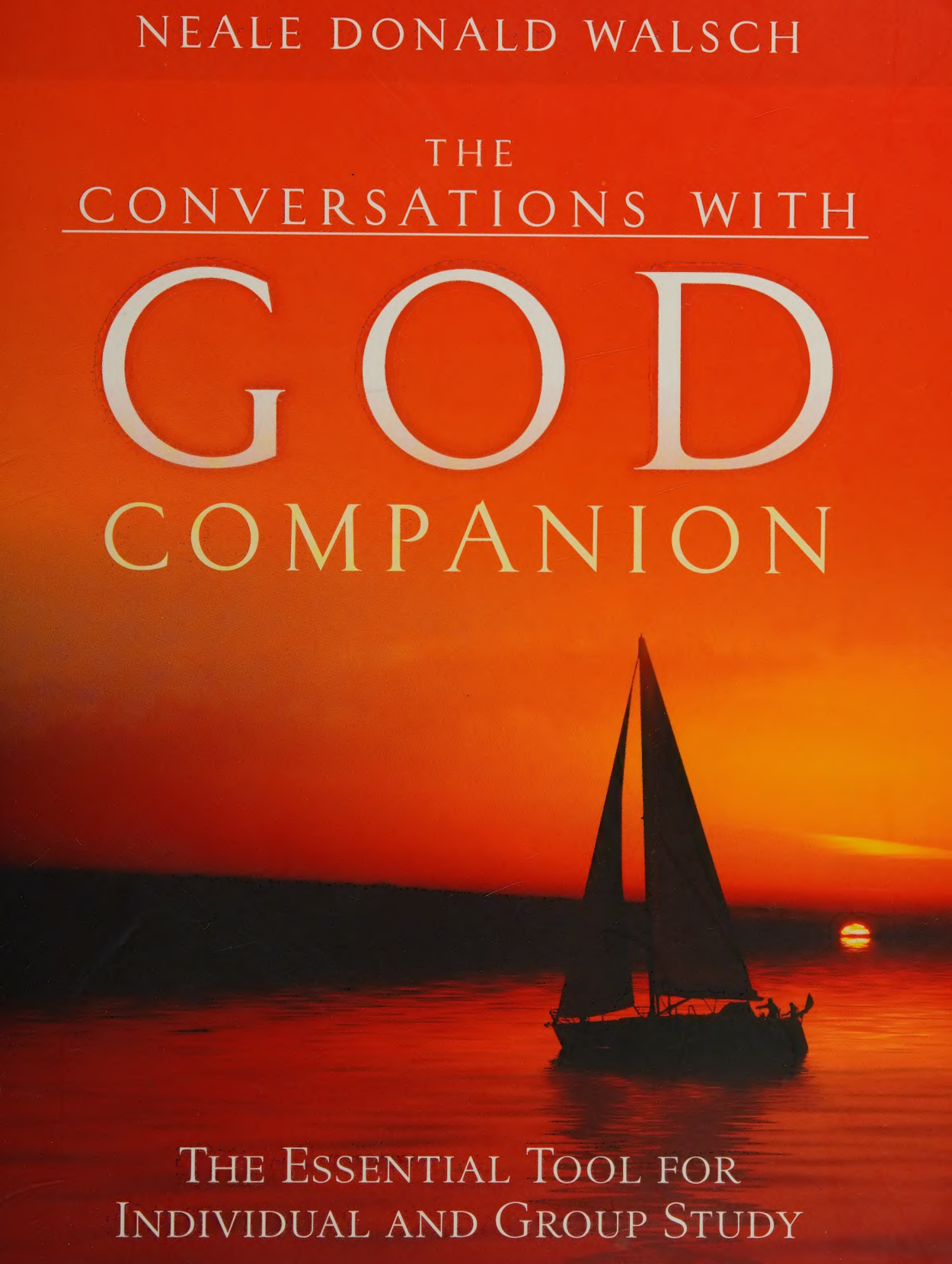
NEALE DONALD WALSCH

THE CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD COMPANION



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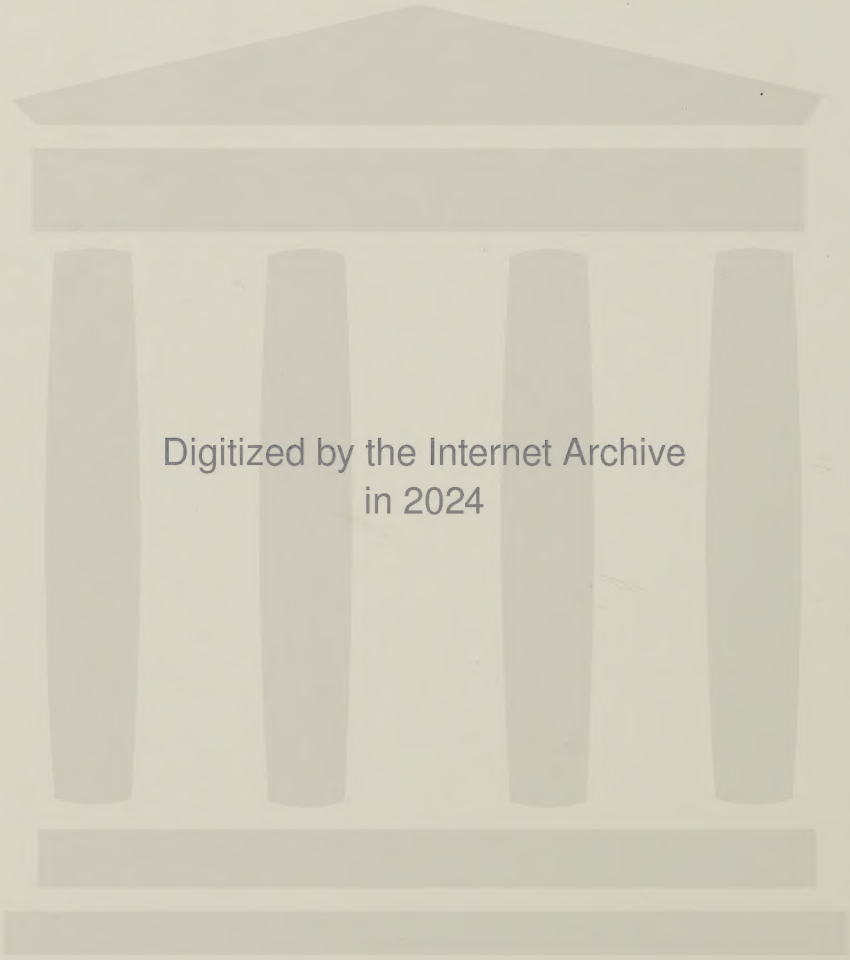
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THE CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD COMPANION

Also by Neale Donald Walsch

Conversations with God, Book 1

Conversations with God, Book 1 Guidebook

Conversations with God, Book 2

Meditations from Conversations with God, Book 2

Conversations with God, Book 3

Questions and Answers on Conversations with God

Friendship with God

Communion with God

The Little Soul and the Sun

The Little Soul and the Earth

Happier Than God

Conversations with God Re-MINDer Cards

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Neale Donald Walsch on Abundance and Right Livelihood

Neale Donald Walsch on Holistic Living

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Bringers of the Light

ReCreating Your Self

Conversations with God for Teens

The New Revelations: A Conversation with God

The Wedding Vows from Conversations with God (with Nancy Fleming-Walsch)

THE CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD COMPANION

THE ESSENTIAL TOOL FOR INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP STUDY

NEALE DONALD WALSCH

HR for the evolving human spirit
HAMPTON ROADS PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC.

The Conversations with God Companion
The Essential Tool for Individual and Group Study

Neale Donald Walsch

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To the thousands of readers of the Conversations with God series around the world who have committed themselves to exploring at the deepest level the concepts contained in those books. Your courage and your willingness to examine and expand your own life and experience is an inspiration to me. You are the real Seekers of Truth, who are never satisfied with the surface of things, but choose more—always more—and thus create for yourselves lives that enrich and bless us all.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments xi

Prologue xiii

Introduction xix

CHAPTER ONE: God Never Shuts Up 1

Chapter 1, Section 2: . . . *and nothing but the Truth, so help you God* 9

Chapter 1, Section 3: *Please pay it no mind* 20

Chapter 1, Section 4: *And now, a word from our sponsor* 27

Chapter 1, Section 5: *Like what is unlike what you like* 31

Chapter 1, Section 6: *Can you believe the promise of God?* 35

Chapter 1, Section 7: *My ultimate fear is this . . .* 38

CHAPTER TWO: Who Is God? 47

Chapter 2, Section 2: *What good are values?* 51

Chapter 2, Section 3: *You, too, can have a dialogue with God* 56

CHAPTER THREE: The Holy Triad 59
Chapter 3, Section 2: *Hey, what's the big idea?* 65
Chapter 3, Section 3: *Big dividends from small change* 71
Chapter 3, Section 4: *Change your purpose in life* 73
Chapter 3, Section 5: *Who do you think you are, anyway?* 77

CHAPTER FOUR: Stop Trying to Learn 81

CHAPTER FIVE: How God Takes Command 85
Chapter 5, Section 2: *The renunciation of renunciation* 88
Chapter 5, Section 3: *Expecting no more expectations* 93

CHAPTER SIX: "Suffering Succotash!" 99

CHAPTER SEVEN: The Path of the Householder 103

CHAPTER EIGHT: Relating to Relationship 109
Chapter 8, Section 2: *The virtue of being self-centered* 114
Chapter 8, Section 3: *Doing what is best for you* 120
Chapter 8, Section 4: *The best wedding vows ever* 126

CHAPTER NINE: You Are the Truth 137

CHAPTER TEN: Real Love Knows No Conditions 145

CHAPTER ELEVEN: The Money Game 149

CHAPTER TWELVE: Being versus Doing 159
Chapter 12, Section 2: *Want not, waste not* 165
Chapter 12, Section 3: *You're nobody* 171

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: Just for the Health of It 177
Chapter 13, Section 2: *Your true relationship with God* 184

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: The Prayer That Never Ends 191

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: Moving on to *Book 2* 197

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: Discovering the Will of God 203

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: Changing Your Mind 207

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: Even This Will Pass Away 213

CHAPTER NINETEEN: Creating Divinity 219

CHAPTER TWENTY: Educating Our Young 223

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE: A Crisis of Caring 231

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO: Transparency as a Lifestyle 237

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE: Additional Inquiries—*Book 2* 243

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR: Moving Now to *Book 3* 247

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE: The Parable of the Rock 253

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX: God Will Never Forgive You 257

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN: The Question of Death 265

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT: About Promises—and Creation 271

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE: Highly Evolved Beings 279

CHAPTER THIRTY: In Conclusion . . . 289

Index 293

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For the entirety of my life, and anything good or decent or creative or wonderful I may have done with it, I thank my dearest friend and closest companion, God.

I have never known such a wonderful friendship—that's exactly what it feels I have going here—and I want never to miss an opportunity to acknowledge it. I am so glad that life has given me the opportunity to explain to everyone in minute detail just how to develop such a friendship, and how to use it. For God wants most of all to be used. And that's what we want as well. We want a *relationship with God* that's *functional* and *useful.* The ways in which you might create such a relationship are explored in the wonderful book *Friendship with God.* If you have not yet read that book, I surely encourage you to do so.

Next, I want to thank my publishers (who are very much, come to think of it, like God). I have met few people in my life with the courage and the integrity I have found in Robert S. Friedman, publisher at Hampton Roads Publishing Company, the man who first placed *Conversations with God* before the public by taking a terrific gamble, and Susan Peterson Kennedy, president of Penguin Group USA, who took an equally large gamble by placing the book into hardcover and causing it to be distributed around the world.

I am certain that there are no nicer, more sincere, more literarily sensitive, honest, and powerfully effective people in the publishing industry, and I consider it one of the

highest honors of my life to have come to know both of them. Bob and Susan, my thanks continue to this very day, now many years later, and can never be enough.

My thanks go as well to Don Stewart of Klamath, California, who found *CwG* so exciting that he came to one of our retreats, then went home and reread the book line by line in order to help me put together the Additional Inquiries questions at the end of many of the chapters of this companion. While I've added a few, most of the questions were first dreamt up by Don—so if they're a bit tough in places (and also very helpful in increasing your comprehension of the material), you have him to thank for being the meanie at the front of the classroom who will not let you go home until you've "learned it all."

In my personal life, my thanks go to many, including the teammates at the ReCreation Foundation, the nonprofit organization that has worked now for well over a decade to carry the freedom-giving messages of *CwG* into the world. These wonderful people make it possible to achieve the impossible, and only by their doing everything *else* could I have ever been able to put together this companion. My deep gratitude to Will Richardson, Patty Hammett, Kate Fenley, and Michelle Woods.

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I have had many friends in my life and some wonderful people who have been close to me. I owe them all my deep thanks for helping me to grow and for allowing me to make my worst behavioral mistakes at their expense. I wish I could have grown up faster.

Now, as I make the final trek of a long journey on this planet, I am blessed with a companion who more perfectly mirrors me than anyone else I have ever known. My highest acknowledgement and deepest appreciation go to my wife, Em Claire. How she puts up with me I don't know. And that she does so with such humor and grace, offering sparkling insights with compassion and love, is a miracle of which I am in no way worthy. Thank you, my Other, for all that you are and all that you do. I am so in love with you!

—NDW

PROLOGUE

Our world is presently in the midst of something that happens once every several hundred years. Because that is true, a few words are required here to set the stage for what you are about to experience within the pages of this book.

If you take a look around you, you will see that everything is changing. The global political system is changing. The global financial system is changing. The global social system is changing. Indeed, humanity's *belief system* is changing. What we believe about life, what we believe about ourselves, what we believe about the Universe itself is changing.

This is a repeating phenomenon that I call, for lack of better words, *The Shift.* In every previous case this periodic upheaval has turned our daily experience on this planet upside down. It is about to do the same right now.

For a variety of reasons that we will explore, *The Shift* taking place in this present moment will do more. It will lead to either breakthrough or breakdown.

That is because something is about to happen now, something is going to change now, which hasn't happened or changed for several *thousand* years.

Not several hundred, several thousand.

We are about to discover A New God.

A Change of Perspective

New Gods don't come along very often. When they do, the entire ground of being of the human species shifts. We become, quite literally, New Humans.

It could hardly be any other way. That is because our belief about God produces our belief about ourselves. And, in both cases, belief creates experience.

Beliefs change when perspectives change—and that's exactly what's happening now. The perspective of humanity, the place from which we look at life, is changing. Dramatically. And this is creating *The Shift.*

Because our perspective is changing *so* dramatically, we are creating the kind of shift that occurs only once in several millennia.

What is bringing about this huge, this monumental, change in humanity's perspective? Knowledge. Awareness. Consciousness. An exponential growth in all three.

Our increasing knowledge has produced an expanding awareness that has given birth to an awakening of full consciousness. That is, we have become *consciously aware* of what we *know.*

It is one thing to know something, and it is quite another thing to know that we know. At first, this statement may seem like a word game. It is not. It is demonstrably true that we can know certain things and not know that we know them. (For instance, a baby knows how to swim, but a baby does not know that it knows how to swim. Put a baby into water and it will swim. Yet it will not know that it "knows" how to do that.)

You may call this *instinct,* and thus label this knowledge *instinctual.* I would describe it as *spiritual*—as that which already exists within us, because it is that from which we are *made.* This knowledge, this information, therefore, is not something that we learn, it is something that we call forth. We literally *bring it forward* from the deepest reaches of our being, where it eternally resides.

I want to suggest an amazing thing: that we all know everything at the deepest reaches of our being. There is no knowledge about the fundamental truths of life that does not already exist within us. We know who we are, why we are here, and what life is about. Nobody has to inform us about this. We already know it. Cellularly. Spiritually. Or what some might call *instinctively.*

Yet coming to "know that we know" is another thing. That is a process. I observe it as a process humanity completes in stages. I suggest that we call our movement through these stages "evolution."

As we access and regain our deepest awareness about ourselves and the world around us, we expand in our present-moment understanding of that world and of our place in it, producing an elevation of consciousness. That is, we become *consciously* aware that we know that we *know.* We become, in a sense, aware of our Awareness.

This process, once it begins, is exponential. It does not move in a 1–2–3–4 progression, but in a 1–2–4–8–16–32 progression, doubling itself at each step. The trick is to cause the process to begin. This is called The Awakening. There are many things that can awaken slumbering human beings, and it is through this breathtakingly rapid *consciousness raising* that humanity shifts its perspective.

Our perspective creates our perception, our perception creates our belief, our belief creates our behavior, our behavior creates our experience, our experience creates our reality, and our reality creates our next perspective.

It is a circle. It is a cycle. And when the cycle is complete, we experience *The Shift.*

The Final Shift

Even cycles move in cycles. The Universe is a marvelous example of this, in physical form. The Universe is nothing but a series of circles within circles, orbits within orbits, swirls within swirls, cycles within cycles.

When we have experienced enough smaller cycles, when we have experienced *The Shift* a sufficient number of times, we are brought back around to the top of the bigger cycle—or what I call *The Alteration.*

Just as it takes so many seconds to make a minute, so many minutes to make an hour, so many hours to make a day, so many days to make a week, and so on, so, too, does it take so many shifts to make an alteration.

I don't pretend to know precisely how many that is, but I think we can observe, loosely, that *The Shift* occurs every several hundred years and that *The Alteration* occurs every several thousand. History shows us this.

I believe that we are now in the midst of the final *Shift* leading to our next *Alteration.* I observe this everywhere I look—and every which *way* I look.

If I look at the world geologically, I see it. If I look at the world ecologically, I see it. If I look at the world economically, I see it. If I look at the world politically, I see it. If I look at the world scientifically, I see it. If I look at the world technologically, I see

it. If I look at the world medically, I see it. And, perhaps most important of all, if I look at the world spiritually, I see it.

This is what is going on right now, and this will do more than turn life upside down. It will turn it *right side up.* Not a small part of *The Alteration* will be a substantially altered view of ourselves, of our Universe, of the process that we call Life, and of what we have come to call God.

In the days and weeks, in the months and years just ahead, humanity will discover that almost everything that we thought was true about God is inaccurate.

When I appeared on NBC's *Today* show a number of years ago, host Matt Lauer asked me if I really thought that God had spoken directly to me. When I said yes, he replied: "Then can you tell us, in a paragraph or so, what is God's message to the world?"

I said, "Matt, I can do that in five words."

YOU'VE GOT ME ALL WRONG.

If this is true (and I believe it to be *profoundly* true), new avenues of human exploration are immediately opened. For if we think that what we know about God may not be accurate, the human mind will not rest until the riddle of God is solved. That is our nature. That is who we are. We cannot abide an unsolved mystery.

The biggest problem with the human race has been its assumption (if not to say, its *assertion*) that it has solved the mystery of God.

The Alteration is about setting aside that assumption.

Uncharted Territory

Setting aside humanity's biggest assumptions is not easily done—and it is rarely done joyfully and voluntarily. The movement to new beliefs is almost always the result of *involuntary* adjustments, made necessary by the inexorable expansion of knowledge.

It took the Most Holy Roman Catholic Church hundreds of years to reverse the excommunication of Galileo. The medical profession laughed at the doctor who suggested that washing one's hands before delivering a baby would dramatically reduce deaths and disease in newborns. Only complete and utter embarrassment, caused by the

expansion of knowledge to the point where things became *obviously and undeniably so* could move the religious and medical communities to alter their beliefs.

Now the time has come for humanity to ask itself a crucial question:

Is it possible that there is something we do not understand about God and about Life, the understanding of which could change everything?

If our answer to that question is yes—if we feel that what we know about God may not be totally accurate, nor our understanding complete—then we must ask ourselves additional questions: *How can we expand or enlarge our understanding? From what source or experience will we find ourselves able to view and consider, much less embrace, a larger reality?*

The answer is, we must be willing to move into unchartered territory. We must be willing to consider unverifiable sources and to at least explore "unacceptable" ideas. For it is as George Bernard Shaw wryly observed: *All great truth begins as blasphemy.*

The striking and spiritually revolutionary material in *Conversations with God, Books 1, 2,* and *3* can be one source of such exploration, and this companion to the original trilogy can provide you with an experience of unchartered territory. It can take you to places of inner discovery and outer expression to which you have never gone before.

The *CwG Companion . . .*

highlights major messages in the original *Conversations with God* dialogue . . .

explores the spiritual principles underlying those messages . . .

invites inquirers to investigate the applicability of those principles to everyday life, and . . .

moves seekers from concept to experience in their consideration of the material.

Make no mistake about it: *Conversations with God* IS considered "blasphemy" by many people. Yet only those who have remained open to the possibility of finding wisdom in opposing views and opportunity for growth in unacceptable ideas have changed the world.

Our world could use a little changing. There can be no serious argument about that. And so we begin with *Book 1,* chapter 1, examining and *experientializing* the concepts placed before us by this extraordinary dialogue with Deity, from the opening conversation right straight through to *Book 3*'s closing words. . . .

INTRODUCTION

In May 1995 something extraordinary happened, something that changed the lives of thousands of people and will change the lives of thousands more for years to come. Indeed, the impact will ultimately affect millions.

In May 1995 Hampton Roads Publishing Company of Charlottesville, Virginia, released a little white book with twelve words on its cover, 76,468 words in its interior, and one simple, elegant thought at the core of its message.

LOVE IS ALL THERE IS

I can say humbly that it is now clear *Conversations with God, Book 1* is a very special document. While there is very little that is new in the book, it offers a new way of sharing that which is ancient. For in *Conversations with God,* Deity has spoken to Everyman . . . in Everyman's own language. This has made the wisdom of the ages accessible at last to the average person, perhaps to the largest audience ever.

Within months of the release of this remarkable document (the first volume in a trilogy), informal study groups began forming spontaneously among the people who had read it. They somehow found each other, and began gathering in pockets to pore

over the book's marvelous contents. Deeper and deeper into the material they delved, and the more deeply they delved, the more deeply they understood its meaning. Still, there was something more they wished to have. They wished to have an *experience* of its meaning, not merely an understanding. That is, they wished the truths in *Conversations with God* to be rendered *functional* in their daily lives.

This companion offers a way to do that. In it, we will take a "guided tour" of the place to which *Conversations with God, Book 1* moves us. And move us it does, to a wonderful place filled with peace and of joy, understanding, and love. It is a space of clarity and of deep insight. It is a place where much more is possible than we may have dreamed or imagined.

This is the place within our mind where wisdom dwells, the place within our heart where love resides, the place within our soul where we are home at last.

Many people were transported to this place with a single reading of *CwG*. Yet the real trick is to stay in this place, to never leave it. In an effort to accomplish this, people found themselves reading *CwG* over and over again. And that wasn't a bad idea. Indeed, the book itself suggests it.

But now it's time to go to the next place. Now it's time to not only go *through* the book over and over, but to go deeper *into* it. That's where this companion takes you.

Allowing This Book to be Experiential

This book is meant to be experiential. There is enough in life that is observational, and there is more than enough that is referential. This book seeks to be something greater than that. It seeks to take you into your own experience.

For that reason, the book contains four ways in which you may interact with it: Additional Inquiries, Exercises, Assignments, and Experiments. In this way the *Companion* invites you to *do stuff, not just read stuff.* The "stuff" it invites you to do may be done alone or as a member of a group with equal value.

The **Exercises** in the book are processes you are invited to undertake while you are reading a chapter or section. That is, you read a bit (in study groups you may wish to take turns reading aloud), do the exercise, read a bit more, do another exercise, and so on. These exercises seek to bring the text alive in an experiential way. Passing over them in order to simply keep reading is not the way to receive the most benefit from this companion.

The **Assignments** and **Experiments** are mini-projects—what might be called "lab work"—which you are invited to complete after finishing a section or chapter. They are for those times between readings (or between study group sessions) when you put the book down. Some of them actually allow you to take the wisdom in the book into the "laboratory of life"—into the "real world"—and try it out, to see what "works" and what "doesn't work" for you. Others call for self-assessments and inner work during the week. All of them seek to bring you back to the book with greater understanding.

This book is an excellent tool for classes or study groups. If you are working through this material with a group, see the section at the end of this introduction on How You May Want to Proceed If You Are in a Study Group. Whether working with a group or individually, it is suggested that you keep a *Companion* journal. In fact, it will be virtually impossible for you to proceed without one. There will be much to write down, much to keep track of, many thoughts that you will wish to save, many processes that require writing, and many times when you will be asked to record your reaction to or comments about a particular assignment, experiment, or experience.

If you are working through this book by yourself and not as part of a group, you will find the keeping of a journal even more valuable, for it is here you will place your discussion of the topics and your answers to the questions that the *Companion* invites you to address.

Again, the point of the processes through which this book guides you is to *experience* what you know, to *experience* what is true for you, rather than observe, or be referred to, what is true for others.

Religion does that. Religion does not care about your own experience. Religion does not invite you to explore too much of that. In fact, religion steers you away from it. Some religions actually forbid you to question, forbid you to deviate, forbid you to seek your own personal experience. It is the job of religion not to invite you to experience what is true for you, but to *tell you outright* what *should* be true for you.

Politics does that. Politics does not care about your own experience. Politics does not invite you to explore too much of that. In fact, politics steers you away from it. Some political movements actually forbid you to question, forbid you to deviate, forbid you to seek your own personal experience. It is the job of politics not to invite you to experience what is true for you, but to tell *you outright* what *should* be true for you.

Society does that. Society does not care about your own experience. Society does not invite you to explore too much of that. In fact, society steers you away from it. Some

societies actually forbid you to question, forbid you to deviate, forbid you to seek your own personal experience. It is the job of society not to invite you to experience what is true for you, but to *tell you outright* what *should* be true for you.

Government does that. Government does not care about your own experience. Government does not invite you to explore too much of that. In fact, government steers you away from it. Some governments actually forbid you to question, forbid you to deviate, forbid you to seek your own personal experience. It is the job of government not to invite you to experience what is true for you, but to *tell you outright* what *should* be true for you.

Education does that. Education does not care about your own experience. Education does not invite you to explore too much of that. In fact, education steers you away from it. Some educators actually forbid you to question, forbid you to deviate, forbid you to seek your own personal experience. It is the job of education not to invite you to experience what is true for you, but to *tell you outright* what *should* be true for you.

All of the above may not be true all of the time, but all of the above is true some of the time. You can tell when these things are happening because that is when things are not going well, when things are bad. And in most religions, in most political movements, in most societies, in most governments, and in most educational systems, things are not going well these days.

This is why the world is today the way it is.

The introduction to *CwG, Book 2* says: "We seem to be singularly unable to change ourselves. In spite of what we experience to be not good for us at all, we appear profoundly impotent in the face of the most exciting opportunities to move to new understandings, and remarkably lacking in the strength or the will to do anything within the framework of human affairs other than what we have done before. In short, we keep repeating behaviors, and failed behaviors at that, instead of inventing new ones. We are banging ourselves over the head with a hammer, and we appear to be unable to stop. In this we display lamentable ignorance. We are, as God points out in this book, rather primitive beings."

A look at the headlines during the time this update is being written (mid-January 2009) offers a remarkable glimpse at the behaviors into which the human race for centuries has fallen and from which it cannot seem to extricate itself to this very day:

ISRAELI BARRAGE HITS U.N. SCHOOL IN GAZA

SMUGGLERS SINK "DRUG SUBS"

ECONOMY IN WORST SHAPE SINCE GREAT DEPRESSION

RUSSIA STOPS GAS PIPELINE TO UKRAINE AND EUROPE

Seeing their adult role models acting like children, the children of this society begin to act like adults. . . .

VERY YOUNG SUSPECTS

Three boys, two eight-year-olds and one six-year-old, have been arrested near San Francisco on suspicion of attempted murder.

Police in Richmond, California, believe the trio brutally kicked and beat a month-old baby they found in a house from which they were stealing a bicycle. The baby was in critical condition with severe head injuries. His parents were at work and a sister was in another part of the house during the attack.

The suspects were caught with the stolen bicycle after being reported by witnesses. They're being held at a juvenile hall. Authorities are trying to decide how to handle the case.

—Reuters News Service, 4/24/96

While such evidences startle and disturb us, the effect is generally momentary. The human race shakes its collective head and moves on, offering very little and doing very

little to encourage, stimulate, or produce (much less demand) any real behavioral change. Only a tiny handful of humans is actually engaged in any ongoing effort to free our race from the agonies of its own devices.

The Conversations with God trilogy is crucial to that effort. *Book 1* explores questions basic to the individual human experience, and gently points the way to sanity. *Book 2* examines our present circumstance as a planetary community, and offers blueprints for change. *Book 3* provides insights into the universal cosmology, describes how life is lived in more advanced civilizations elsewhere, and issues a clarion call to those who would seek a newer world.

Taken together, the trilogy amounts to an extraordinary invitation to create and participate in the most sweeping social, sexual, political, economic, and spiritual revolution in the history of the Earth.

This companion is part of that invitation. It takes you step by step through the amazing information in *Book 1,* directing you always to your experience of what is true. For it is now clear that the reason we as a race continue to exhibit and repeat old behaviors is that we have not given ourselves permission to stop listening to old instructions.

Just as our children, sadly, emulate us, so have we emulated our own forbearers, living as they have told us to live, believing what they have told us to believe, adopting the values they have told us to adopt.

These are the values that are killing us. And we will *not* extricate ourselves from the traps of our own devices unless and until we can find a way to move into our *experience* of life, rather than what we have allowed others to tell us must be true.

That is why this companion places so much importance on your experience, and why it seeks to render the wisdom in *Conversations with God, Books 1, 2,* and *3* functional, rather than observational or referential.

If the invitation which the CwG trilogy represents—an invitation to change the whole of the human experience—seems a bit grandiose to you, understand that what we are talking about here is a change in *your* experience. For what has been said so many times is true: the human revolution begins with you.

As you shift and change your own experience, the experience of the whole human race begins to shift and change as well. So this is important work you are doing, this business of changing your life. It has larger consequences than those of which you may initially have been aware.

The *Companion* you are holding seeks to assist you in moving the wisdom you found in *Conversations with God* into your life as *personal experience.*

The Part You Play in This Book

In order for this book to be experiential, you will have to allow it to be. You will need to be willing to play a part in the book's unfoldment. In a sense, you could choose to be its coauthor, just as I chose to be the coauthor of *CwG.*

If you make that choice, you will answer the experiment, do the exercises, and undertake the assignments and experiments in this companion. By this means you will add to the book something that no one else can add. And you will write its ending yourself. That ending will be found on the pages of your own life story.

You do not have to do the exercises, of course. You may skip the assignments as well. This companion will still have great value for you even if you do nothing but read it.

So by all means read it, whether you intend to do the exercises and assignments or not. Simply notice the extent to which you are willing to go. Notice the investment you are willing to make. Then make it, in a way and at a level that is comfortable for you.

How This Companion Is Organized

More than anything, *Conversations with God* is a collection of concepts. It is written in a somewhat circular fashion, returning the reader over and over again to a set of basic conceptual statements that form the framework of its message. As the person through whom this material came, I did not intend to produce such a construction. That is, I did not do it deliberately. It "just happened" to be the way the questions and answers rolled out. Yet I am clear now that the book's True Author knew exactly what She was doing. I see that not only were His answers inspired, so were my questions. By this device did my Friend produce exactly what was intended: a book embracing the largest spiritual concepts, yet producing the smallest amount of confusion. Circling back over statements that introduced enormous truths, and placing them in new contexts from chapter to chapter, was a wonderful way to do that.

It turns out that God is a good writer.

Each of the chapters in this companion covers the major concepts introduced in the corresponding chapter of the Conversations with God trilogy. Thus, one can move front to back through the CwG text and, whenever a new concept is introduced, turn to the

corresponding chapter here and find an opportunity to both explore that concept in greater depth and render it functional in one's daily life.

Some of the chapters in this book are divided into sections, owing to the fact that the corresponding chapter in *CwG* contained so much information that it would have been very difficult to take it in "one gulp."

CwG's chapter 1, for instance, is the longest chapter in the book, and any fruitful study of it would have to be done in sections, taking a small portion of the content at a particular sitting. The same is true of several later chapters.

The *Companion* also indicates where to stop your study for the moment and give yourself time to pause and reflect, work on an assignment, or even conduct an experiment to see how—and whether—the text relates to you.

You will see this sign . . .

To pause and reflect

. . . where those stops should be made. Each "stop" sign marks the ending of a class or individual study session. Gliding past these natural stopping points to move through the *Companion* more quickly could lead to misunderstanding—or simply missing—a point the book is trying to make. Don't go too fast. Give yourself some time.

The Conceptual Framework of *CwG*

The concepts in *CwG* are extraordinary and breathtaking. Some are simple, some are complex. All are incisive, cutting to the core of the human experience, striking at the heart of our human belief systems, and driving right to the point of human life itself.

There are thirty-four core concepts around which the book's message revolves.

1. God is communicating with us all the time.
2. Feeling is the language of the Soul.
3. Thought, Word, and Deed are the three levels of creation.
4. There are only two Sponsoring Thoughts: fear and love.
5. In the absence of that which you are not, that which you are . . . is not.
6. There is no such thing as "Right" and "Wrong."
7. What you fear, you attract.
8. God is Life, and the Stuff Life Is.
9. God needs nothing, and therefore requires nothing from us.
10. God talks to everyone.
11. Human beings consist of three distinct energies.
12. All you see in your world is the outcome of your idea about it.
13. All conditions are temporary. Nothing stays the same. Which way a thing changes depends on you.
14. The purpose of the soul is evolution.
15. You are who you think you are. You are your own thoughts about yourself, made manifest.
16. Life is not a process of discovery, it is a process of creation.
17. God commands no one.
18. What you resist persists.
19. Passion is not expectation, and expectation is not passion.
20. Suffering is not necessary.
21. You need no God.

22. All relationships are holy.
23. Your purpose in life is to decide and to declare, to express and to experience Who You Really Are; this is the purpose of ALL of life.
24. Relationships work best when you always do what is best for you.
25. You are a messenger.
26. You are the truth.
27. God's love is unconditional.
28. There's enough.
29. You are a human being.
30. To want something is to push it away from you.
31. Your life is not about your body.
32. Your health is your creation.
33. You are part of the body of God.
34. All of life is a conversation with God.

Understanding these concepts requires deep thought. Functionalizing them, putting them into action, requires deep commitment: commitment to their truth, commitment to oneself, commitment to the purpose of life.

The purpose of life is to know yourself, create yourself, experience yourself as Who You Really Are. There is no other reason to do anything.

You are doing this right now, and every day of your life. Your every thought, your every word, your every action is a statement to the Universe: *This is Who* I *Am.*

Most of you are making that statement unconsciously, that is, without thinking. I mean that literally. You are deciding, creating, and experiencing Who You Are *without thinking.* Yours is therefore a thoughtless creation. You have given it no thought whatsoever.

This may seem a harsh indictment. Yet if you look at your life honestly, you will see that it is at least to some degree true. Most of you spend much of your life sleepwalking.

You are "on automatic." You go from place to place, move from function to function, slide from utterance to utterance, without conscious thought. You say things without thinking, do things without thinking, and actually *think things without thinking.* (That is, you are not thinking about what you are thinking about.)

Yet there is one thought you do have about all of this—and that is the most dangerous thought of all.

You think none of this makes any difference.

All of this, of course, is why your life is the way it is.

This companion could change all of that.

Let us now look at *Conversations with God* concept by concept, and see how we can make this wisdom useful in our daily lives. For if wisdom isn't useful, of what use is it?

How You May Want to Proceed if You Are in a Study Group

If you are a member of a CwG study group, here are some suggestions on how you may wish to create each study session.

1. Begin each study group session with a brief meditation. Call forth clarity and understanding as your experience.

2. Take a moment for check-in—a very brief statement from each person. Moving quickly around the group, each person says in a word or two how it is going. But remember, this is not a "therapy" group, so resist mightily the temptation to "get into people's stories." (Hint: You may actually want to form a mutual support group of people willing to meet after the study group—or on another night—for the purpose of dealing with individual emotional issues, rather than studying *CwG.*)

3. After check-in, move through the group for a fifteen- to twenty-minute review of the results of the previous week's assignment or experiment. This is often an important time of sharing and mutual discovery.

4. A short break is often best placed after item 3.
5. Begin this week's study material by having a member of the study group read aloud from the narrative that begins the chapter of this companion. When you get to the exercise, read the directions aloud, and then give the group five to ten minutes to complete the process.
6. Discuss the exercise and how it was experienced by members of the group. This is an important time of sharing and discovery.
7. Select another person from the group and continue reading aloud from the narrative material that follows the exercise.
8. At the end of the chapter, read aloud and discuss the coming week's assignment or experiment. Make sure everyone understands it and that there are no questions.
9. Conclude the study session with a clearing process, making sure that no one is "hanging out" with "unfinished business" as a result of the session's work. This is the "good-bye check-in" to make sure everyone is all right.
10. End the session with a brief (that's a key word here) closing meditation.

CHAPTER 1

GOD NEVER SHUTS UP

I believe the charm and the wonder of *Conversations with God* is that it contains so many mind-expanding, paradigm-shifting, belief-challenging statements, yet has found a way to place these statements before us in a manner that is non-offensive and even inviting.

The book opens, for instance, with what for some has long seemed a heresy: an announcement that God has never stopped talking to us.

As it happens, an enormous number of people believe God *has* stopped talking, and that He did so many, many years ago. These people believe that God hasn't said a word since. Not in Direct Revelation, at any rate. His full and final word, they say, is found in the scriptures.

What scriptures? Well, now that depends upon to whom one is speaking. Many say, the Bible. Others say, no, His word is found in the Hebrew Bible. Others say, no, His word is found in the Koran.

Others say, no, it's in the Torah.
Others say, no, in the Mishna.
Others say, the Talmud.

Others, the Bhagavad-Gita.
Others, the Rig Veda.
Others, the Brahmanas.
Others, the Upanishads.
Others, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.
Others, the Puranas.
Others, the Tantras.
Others, the Tao-te Ching.
Others, the Buddha-Dharma.
Others, the Dhammapada.
Others, the Master of Huai-nan.
Others, the Shih-chi.
Others, the Pali Canon.
Others, the Book of Mormon.
Others . . .

Well, the point is, many people believe that Direct Revelation—that is, God speaking directly to humankind—has not occurred since the Holy Scriptures (with which they feel comfortable) were written.

And while few of those who cite these sources agree with each other theologically, many agree on one thing emphatically: *their* Word of God is THE Word of God; *their* way to paradise is THE way to paradise; *their* communication from Deity is THE communication from Deity.

By this measure, *Conversations with God* would have to be heresy, would by definition be blasphemy. Some of the adherents of the Old Books may not be clear about *which* old book contains the Truth, but they *are* clear that no new *book* does.

Surprisingly, even some of the newer, more theologically liberal movements deny even the *possibility* that God could be delivering new truth to anyone today through direct communication, and warn against such latter-day revelations.

And so, at its very beginning (indeed, by its very title) *Conversations with God* presents a challenge, upsets the apple cart, turns most present-day theology on its ear. Yet, interestingly, few people seem to have minded; few who have read *CwG* seem to have any quarrel with the possibility, at least, that God has revealed Himself once more through the written word.

Indeed, I'll go further. An astonishing number of people have come forward to say that *they, too, have experienced such communications.* And so it turns out that my conversation with God may not be such an "uncommon dialogue" after all.

Let's explore this opening thought and see how it relates to you.

The first major concept in *CwG* is that God is communicating with us all of the time; has *always* been communicating with us; has never *stopped* communicating with us; and will use whatever tool is at hand to *continue* that communication, both now and even forever more.

> I talk to everyone. All the time. The question is not to whom do I talk, but who listens?
>
> *—Book 1, page 3*

This, then, is our starting point in this experiential guide.

Concept #1

God is communicating with us all the time.

Let's now see if this is true for you. Let's look to your experience. Has there ever been a time when *you* felt *inspired by God?* Think about this. What would that look like? How would that feel? Is it possible that you have been touched by such inspiration and didn't even know it? Could it be that you have had just such an experience, and simply *haven't called it that?*

I remember an evening several years ago when I was having dinner with a lady friend at her home. A knock came at the door and it was my lady friend's sister, bursting in to announce that she was going to commit suicide. She was serious too. I talked her out of it.

It wasn't easy. It took most of the evening. I listened carefully, I talked a bit, I listened some more, I talked some more. When our dialogue was over and the sister had gone to the bathroom to wash her face and fix her makeup, my lady friend looked at me with astonished gratitude. "How did you know what to *say?*" she asked.

"I don't know," I remember replying. "I don't even know now what I *did* say."

Today I would answer that question differently. Today I would say, "God gave me the words. God spoke directly to your sister, through me."

I am willing to wager that most people can remember times when God spoke or acted through them. They may not have labeled it that, but they have definitely had the experience.

When my son Travis was around seven or eight, we shared an interesting experience. The family was at dinner when Travis suddenly jumped from the table and began racing around the house, his arms waving, his hands shaking wildly, his face covered with panic.

"What's the matter?" I shouted, but I immediately knew the answer. *"Are you choking?"* He flashed a look at me I will never forget. It not only said "Yes, *Yes!"* it also said, "Help me! DO SOMETHING."

Cursing myself for not having taken the Red Cross short course and learned the Heimlich Maneuver, I ran to him, put my left arm around his chest, held him in place, and slammed the middle of his upper back with the palm of my hand. I don't know what I thought I was doing. Dislodging something, I hoped.

It didn't work. Travis was shaking more violently, convulsing from lack of oxygen. His eyes, popping out now, again pierced through me with a message from deep inside his soul: YOU ARE MY ONLY HOPE.

I knew time was running out.

Now I am not a very big person, not a very strong person as men go. I've always been on the slight side, and I have never acquired much muscle. So I don't know how I got it into my head that I could even do what I did next.

Bending down and reaching for his ankles, I lifted Travis high into the air by his two feet, and held him there with *one hand.* Dangling him upside-down, I again thumped his back, this time quite hard, using the meat of my palm. Nothing. I did it again, *very* hard.

(It's not easy to hit your own child that way. You can never know how difficult until you have to do it. I remember thinking, "A bruise is better than death.")

There was a *gawk!* sound, and something—a huge chunk of some damned thing—popped out of Travis's mouth and flew across the room. I put my son down. He gasped for air. He was breathing again.

"Never mind," I heard my partner telling 911, "It's okay. Everything's all right."

I realized as I looked at my son that I could have lost him. Right then. Right there. The other boys were at the table. "Yea, Dad!" they cheered. "Are you all right?" I asked Travis. "Yeah," he replied weakly. "Excuse me," I said, and went upstairs to my bedroom. I sat on the bed and cried.

Thank you, God. God, thank you for showing me the way. For giving me the strength.

Many of us have experienced moments such as this, moments in which we became a larger version of ourselves. I am convinced that in these moments God is talking to us; God is communicating with us; God is acting through us, showing us the way.

The first step in understanding that God is communicating with us *always* is knowing that God is communicating with us *sometimes.* If you can accept the latter, you can begin to see the possibility of the former.

Excercise

Remember a time when you were "larger" than your Self, when you did something you didn't know you could do or said something you didn't know you had it in you to say.

This doesn't have to be something earth-shattering, like saving someone's life or discovering the cure for cancer. It can be something as simple as solving a problem with which you or another has been beset, uttering a single sentence that suddenly makes things clear to someone who has been trapped in confusion, or coming up with a really good idea just when you needed one.

If you have had more than one such experience, pick the most striking one, the one that made the biggest impression on you. Share this now in your group—or, if you are doing this exercise alone, write this down in your *Companion* journal—answering the following questions:

What happened that "triggered" your move to a "larger space"?
What did you say or do that was "larger" than the "usual you"?
What did you feel after the experience was over?
What did you come to know or decide about yourself as a result?

Most people have experienced at least one such time in their life. If you cannot think of a single time in which you "showed up" larger than yourself, ask yourself the following questions, giving the group your answers or writing them in your journal.

1. What would it take for me to consider something I have said or done as something very special?
2. Is there anything I have ever done in my life that could fall into that category?
3. What stops me from being able to acknowledge myself for this?
4. Does self-acknowledgment of something special that I have done make my having done it "less special"?
5. Does God want us to be special? Is it okay to say so when we are?

Further Discussion:
Spiritual versus "practical" communication from God

Have you ever been walking down the street, and for no reason at all found yourself "covered with a feeling" that you could only describe as a "warning"—as if someone inside your head was shouting "look out!"? And have you ever had the experience, in that moment, of looking to your left or your right, only to see a truck coming, or an object falling, or some impending danger looming?

If you have, then you have experienced God talking to you.

Have you ever taken a test, or been given a "pop quiz," or been asked a question, on something you didn't think you knew—only to find the answer mysteriously on the tip of your tongue?

If you have, then you have experienced God talking to you.

Have you ever been deeply hurt, emotionally scarred or wounded, and cried out for an end to the pain, and found yourself in the next instant immersed in a pool of calm, peaceful serenity?

Have you ever been frightened—truly scared—and asked for protection, then to suddenly and almost magically feel impervious to harm, filled with the strength and courage to walk through any experience?

Have you ever faced an incredible dilemma, not knowing the "right" thing to do, only to find that as soon as you let go of your desperate mental struggle, the "right" course of action became immediately apparent to you?

If you have, then you have experienced God talking to you.

Perhaps you can accept that God does "talk" with us, or help us, along the way (or at least that God sends us "guardian angels" or "guides" who do so). Still, the concept of a God who speaks *directly to you* (much less *through you*) on theological matters may be a bit removed from your reality.

Yet if you can accept the former, how can you eliminate the latter? By what manner or means have you come to the determination that God will speak to you of day-to-day things, but not of theological things? Where have you gotten the idea that God suddenly shuts up when the questions get tough? Is it your thought that, while you may be worthy of a warning about a car careening around the corner, you are not worthy of being told the highest truths and the deepest secrets of the universe? And by what measure have you arrived at this assessment of your unworthiness?

Remarkably (and regrettably), many have come to it through organized religion. It is one of life's saddest ironies that the very institutions that are intended to bring us closer to God often push us farther away.

Perhaps the most striking paradox of many organized religions is that they ask you to believe in a God Who may be called upon at any time to help you meet life's most difficult challenges—but Who may not be called upon to help you answer life's most difficult questions.

Indeed, if you are asked where you come up with the answers to the difficult spiritual questions that confront you, and you reply, "Why, I receive all of my answers directly from God. God speaks to me directly," you might well be called a blasphemer. (That is, unless the people to whom you reveal this agree with the answers you have been "given"—in which case you may be called a prophet.)

Most religions ask you to accept their truth, not your own. In this I believe that most religions err. It has been made clear to me that in life the biggest choice you will ever make is the choice between your truth and the truth of another.

To pause and reflect

Experiment

Look to see how many times God is communicating with you this week.

Buy a small, pocket-sized spiral notebook. Use it to make a daily "log" of the communications you are receiving from God. Do not judge yourself in this. Do not tell yourself this "can't be happening" to you, or that it "isn't what it seems." Simply notice every time you feel you are receiving a communication from a higher source. Take out the notepad and mark down the date and the time.

Then relate in a few words the "message" you have received. Make a note of the form in which the message came to you. Was it a thought without pictures? Was it a picture in your mind? Was it something outside of your mind, in your exterior world? A magazine article that just "fell into your lap"? A song you heard, a movie you saw? Was it something someone said, at just the right moment, in just the right way? Was it a feeling that swept over you? Describe the form in which the message came.

Look to see if there is any increase in the number of these "messages" from the beginning of the week to the end. (Often, noticing the first few causes you to notice many more.)

When the week has passed, and you've completed your list, look over the entries, asking yourself these questions:

Do you believe these communications came directly from God? Do you think you are worthy to receive such communications?

Can you feel any difference between communications that seem to be coming from a higher source, and other thoughts and ideas that move through your head, or experiences which come to you? If so, how would you describe this difference?

What, if anything, does this tell you about life, and your conversations with God?

CHAPTER 1, SECTION 2
. . . AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH, SO HELP YOU GOD

In life, the biggest choice you will ever make is the choice between your truth and the truth of another.

And how can you know which truth is "truly" yours? *Conversations with God* says you can know by listening to what you are feeling. Feelings reside in the soul, and the soul is God-in-you. In this place is your truth, and it is in no other.

CONCEPT #2
Feeling is the language of the Soul.

We spend most of our adult lives learning to trust our feelings. This is not surprising, since most of our growing up years were spent learning to *ignore* them.

Many people were told as children that feelings were not "good." It was not "good" to be angry and to show it. It was not "good" to feel jealous and to show it. It was not "good" to feel scared and to show it. It was not "good" even to feel too excited and to show it. It was not good, it was not good, it was *not good.*

If we ran into a room filled from head to toe with youthful exuberance, we were told to hold it down, to not interrupt, to keep still. If we stormed away hurt and angry, we were told to stop that right now, apologize this instant, never speak to elders that way again. If we laughed too loud or cried too long, spoke too soon or asked too much, we were made to know that we had somehow done something "wrong." We had not been "good."

In all of this, we couldn't have missed the point; we couldn't have escaped the message. Life wasn't about learning how to *be,* it was about learning how *not* to be, what we are.

For many adults the biggest challenge is to remember Who They Really Are. Such a big portion of them has been dropped by the wayside, left behind, abandoned, stifled, ignored.

Do you want to know who you are? Do you want to get back in touch with your truth about things—whatever those things may be? Then check out your feelings. Listen to your Soul.

> If you want to know what's true for you about something, look to how you're feeling about it.
>
> *—Book 1, page 3*

Exercise

Look to see what you are "feeling" right now about this book and what it is saying. Discuss this in your group, asking all the group members to describe their feeling about the material you are now reading. If you are working alone, write this in your *Companion* journal.

If you have completed this, go on.

Remember the last time you felt strongly about something. Anything. It doesn't matter. Just remember the last time you felt really strongly about something.

Bring this moment to your mind. Remember the incident; remember the experience; try to remember the exact feeling. Then answer the following questions.

Were your feelings expressed to others at the time? If so, how did you feel after expressing your feelings? If they were not expressed, why were they withheld? How did you feel after withholding them? How do you feel today about expressing to others what is going on with you?

	Really OK about It	A Little Ill at Ease	Very Uncomfortable
When I express my deepest feelings to others, I am			
When I keep things to myself, I am			
When others express their deepest feelings to me, I am			

Further Discussion:
Feelings versus emotions

Try not to confuse feelings with emotions.

Your feelings are what you know about a thing. Your emotions are what you do with what you know.

A feeling is energy.

An emotion is energy in motion.

There is a difference between the two.

Your feeling is your truth. It is exactly how you feel about a thing, based on what you factually and intuitively know.

Because feelings are what you know about a thing, they will always be your truth, but they may not be *the* truth. That is, they may not be what you would have formerly called Objective Truth, especially if you look only at what you factually know, and set aside or ignore what you intuitively know.

There is no such thing as Objective or Factual Truth in this Reality. All truth in our world is created by the context within which it is experienced or observed.

Within the context of your life, for instance, the Sun is "up," the Earth is "down," the air and the sky are between. To Neil Armstrong, on his way to the Moon, there were, no doubt, many moments when the sun wasn't "up" at all, but "down." He may have found himself looking "up" at the Earth instead. "Up" and "down" are relative terms. We can all understand this. What we don't understand (or perhaps simply don't want to confront or deal with) is that *all* of "reality" is relative—which is to say that all truth is

contextual . . . which is to say that nothing is *truly* true at all! Still, to make some sense out of our lives, to put some order into them, we *decide upon* what we choose to call Objective Truth.

If, therefore, what you know about a thing is false, or incomplete, or misleading (within the context of your planet's self-created Objective Truth), you will have a false, or incomplete, or misleading "feeling." This will make it no less your *truth.* You will still "truly feel that way." Your feelings will simply not be what is Objectively True within the larger context of your life.

When I was around eight or nine, I once thought I was drowning as a result of a childhood prank played on me by another boy my age. It was both a frightening and an embarrassing experience, because I was mocked and jeered by my older brother and his friends for not realizing that the "crisis" in which I found myself could have been resolved by my simply standing up, instead of flailing around. It turns out the water in which I'd been dumped was only three feet deep!

Years later, as an adult, I was desperately afraid to go near the water—would not even venture into the deep end of a swimming pool—out of fear that I would drown.

This is an instance in which what I "knew" about a thing (namely, "all bodies of water are unsafe; you are going to drown") was, within the context of life as I was then living it, "false," or incomplete, or misleading. That made it no less my truth. I *truly felt that way!* Yet Objective Truth within the larger context of my life was that the pool, at the edge of which I stood utterly paralyzed, was not even as deep as I was tall; that there were two lifeguards within fifty feet of me; and that the place was full of people who were obviously competent swimmers—one of which was my own wife, gently urging me to get over my fear and get into the water.

The Objective Truth within the context of my world at that moment was that I was clearly not very likely to drown if I slipped into the deep end of this pool. Yet do you think that allowed me to do it? *Not on your life.*

Now just about the time I was getting in touch with these feelings, someone in my party came over to me and made fun of my fear, grabbing me and pulling me toward the edge of the pool, playfully threatening to throw me in. I turned and let out a stream of invectives that shattered the poolside merriment of that Sunday afternoon and embarrassed my wife to high heaven.

I had given in to my emotion.

Emotion is the power that creates, but it has nothing to do with what is really so. (Little of what you create in your life does.)

Emotion is neither true nor false. It is simply energy in motion, and so, it simply *is.*

An emotion is an experience. A feeling is a *knowing.*

How you *feel* is what you *know* about a thing. How you *express* those feelings is how you *emote*—or experience *emotion,* that is, how you place *energy into motion.*

Emotion is energy in motion. When you move energy, you create effect.
—Book 1, page 54

You do not have to place energy into motion around any feeling. To do or not to do this is your choice. Many people do not know this. They confuse feelings with emotion, and imagine that because they *know* something, they *must do something about it.* That is, they must set energy into motion. And so they have an *emotional response* to a thing. They have added emotion (energy moving) to a feeling (a knowing). This can produce all manner of interesting results.

You can *know* (feel) that you love a person, but you don't have to *do anything about it.* You can *know* (feel) that you dislike a person, but you don't have to *do anything about it.* It is when you translate what you *know* (what you are feeling) into *action* (e + motion = energy in motion) that you have an "emotional response." This is not to say that an emotional response is bad. As a matter of fact, the term "bad" is totally out of place here, for there is nothing that is "good" or "bad." There is only that which *serves your purpose*—or does not.

Your Purpose (and that word is capitalized deliberately to underline its importance) is the key to everything. In order to know whether anything (including an "emotional reaction") serves your Purpose, you have to know what your Purpose is. If you are not clear as to your Purpose in any given moment or situation, to say nothing of all of life, it will be very difficult for you to decide or to choose how you want to act or react, which is to say, how you want to *be.*

Beingness is everything. And so this decision, this choice, is no small matter.

Many people believe that this business of "beingness" is not a choice; that we are being what we are being, and we can't help it; that we are reacting the way we are reacting, and we can't help it; that we are simply "having an emotional reaction," and what's wrong with that?

There's nothing wrong with it, of course, as it has just been pointed out. Ah, but whether it *serves* you . . . that's another matter.

Further Discussion:
Listening to feelings when making decisions

If feelings are the language of the soul, it makes sense that we would do well to listen to our feelings when making decisions. Yet we must be careful not to listen to our *data* and *call* them our feelings. Data resides in the mind. Feelings are the language of the soul. Data is not a feeling. It is a piece of information. (It is not a fluke that the "feeling-less" android on *Star Trek: The Next Generation* was named "Data.")

When we listen to *data* (that is, all that we think we "know" about a thing, based on previous experience), we often make one kind of choice. When we listen to *feelings,* we often make another. Fear is an *emotion* based on data originating in the mind. Love is a *feeling* based on beingness originating in the soul.

The messages of the Soul are received with ultimate clarity only when we have *moved* in *consciousness* directly to the Soul level, bypassing the mind and all the considerations of the mind, to experience the truth of our Being. (That is, the truth of what we are now *being.*)

Exercise

List your last three *major* decisions. Use the forms to analyze them.

MY LAST THREE MAJOR DECISIONS

On_____ I decided to_____
Give Date or Year

On_____ I decided to_____
Give Date or Year

On_____ I decided to_____
Give Date or Year

WHY I MADE THESE DECISIONS

I made decision #1 because_____.

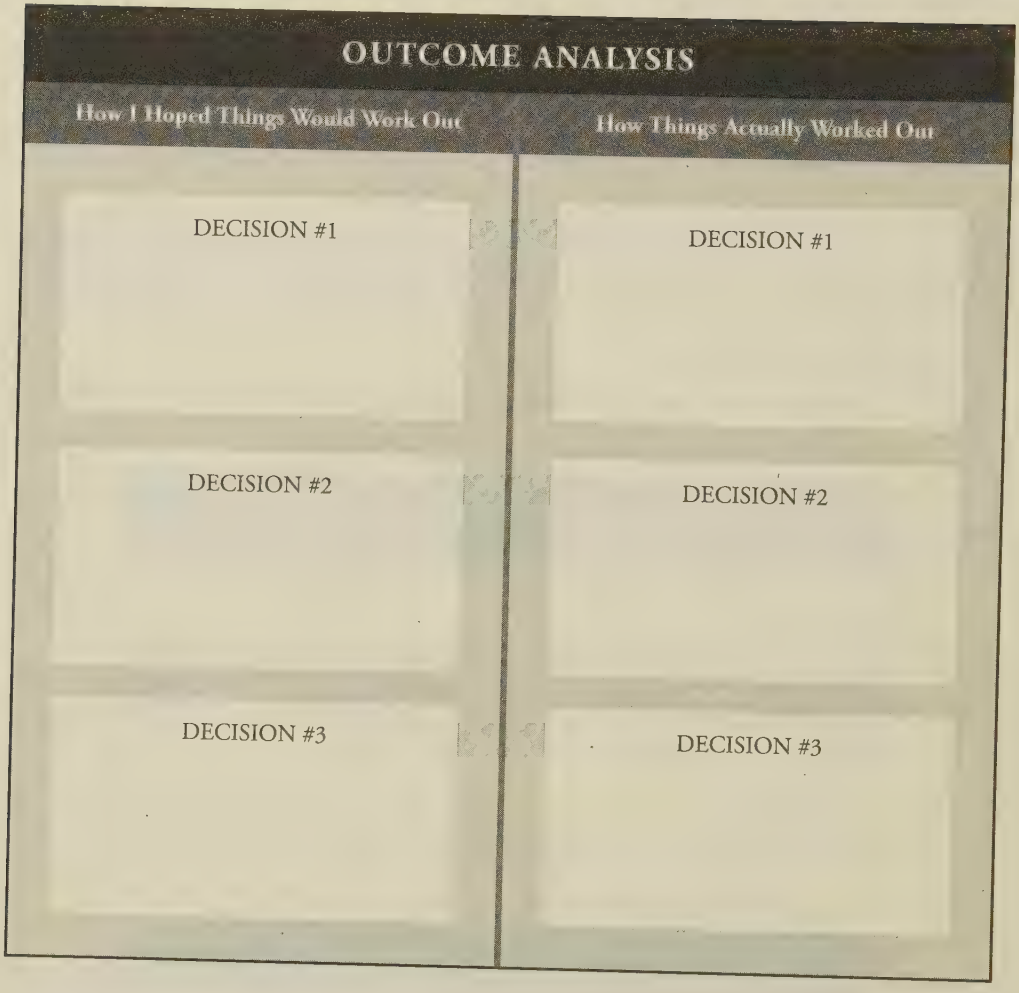
I made decision #2 because_____.

I made decision #3 because_____.

LOOKING BACK, I SEE THAT THESE WERE DECISIONS OF THE:	MIND	SOUL
Decision #1	☐	☐
Decision #2	☐	☐
Decision #3	☐	☐

% OF MIND / SOUL DECISIONS	33%	66%	100%
MIND	☐	☐	☐
SOUL	☐	☐	☐

What, if anything, does this tell you about yourself? Do you think this % would hold up over your last ten important decisions?



Further Discussion:
How to tell "what's what"

The above exercise may have made one thing clear to you: it is not always easy to know "where you're coming from" in making your decisions and choices. Are you listening to the voice in your head? Or, are you following the urgings of your soul?

To differentiate, remember this: what your mind knows is what you factually know. It is your "data." What your soul knows is what you factually *and intuitively* know. (And,

indeed, your intuitive information may be much more complete than your factual information.) From this total awareness your *feeling* emerges.

Still, there are those who will tell you that even "intuition" has sometimes fooled them. And they would be right. This is a very delicate thing, this conversation with God. Even within the realm of what seems like "intuition" we receive messages that can sometimes lead to error.

How, then, to know? What, then, to do? Who, then, to "listen to"? Let's see what *CwG* says on this.

> The challenge is one of discernment. The difficulty is knowing the difference between messages from God and data from other sources. Discrimination is a simple matter with the application of a basic rule.
>
> Mine is always your Highest Thought, your Clearest Word, your Grandest Feeling. Anything less is from another source.
>
> *—Book 1, page 4*

We have been saying "be out of your mind!" Yet now we speak of your "highest thought." This brings us to a complex question. Are thought and mind the same?

To pause and reflect

Assignment

Look to see how you are making your decisions and choices NOW. Chances are you will make at least one fairly important decision during the next week. Maybe you are facing an important personal choice right now. Use the forms below to track "where you are coming

from" and how you are making present-day decisions and choices. The first form is for a "right now" choice you are facing. The second is for use over the next week. It is a "choice diary."

Right now **a choice I'm facing is . . .**

_____

_____

_____

When I come from my Mind (prior data) about this choice, here is what I get:

_____

_____

_____

When I come from my Soul (intuitive feelings) about this choice, here is what I get:

_____

_____

_____

Looking at this I see that between the two there is . . .

☐ **No Difference** ☐ **A Little Difference** ☐ **A Big Difference**

Here is the difference I see:

MIND

_____

_____

_____

_____

SOUL

_____

_____

_____

_____

This Week I will have the opportunity to make at least one or two important decisions or choices. While I cannot know now on which day those opportunities will fall,

I will keep the following "diary" showing the day and the "place" I experienced myself to be "coming from," when the decision or choice was made.

Note: *If you are using this companion with a group or class, please bring this assignment with you for discussion.*

WEEKLY CHOICE DIARY

MONDAY

A choice or decision I had to make today

Where I "came from" when I made it:
☐ MIND ☐ SOUL

TUESDAY

A choice or decision I had to make today

Where I "came from" when I made it:
☐ MIND ☐ SOUL

WEDNESDAY

A choice or decision I had to make today

Where I "came from" when I made it:
☐ MIND ☐ SOUL

THURSDAY

A choice or decision I had to make today

Where I "came from" when I made it:
☐ MIND ☐ SOUL

FRIDAY

A choice or decision I had to make today

Where I "came from" when I made it:
☐ MIND ☐ SOUL

SATURDAY

A choice or decision I had to make today

Where I "came from" when I made it:
☐ MIND ☐ SOUL

SUNDAY

A choice or decision I had to make today

Where I "came from" when I made it:
☐ MIND ☐ SOUL

SUMMARY

I would summarize the findings here as follows:

CHAPTER 1, SECTION 3
PLEASE PAY IT NO MIND

We have been saying, "Be out of your mind!" Yet now we speak of your "highest thought." This brings us to a complex question. Are thought and mind the same?

The answer is no. That is why it can be said that you (your ego—which is your sense of self) must be out of your mind and searching your soul in order to know your Highest Thought.

Your thought is an *action.* The moment you think, you act. You create something. All thought is creative. Likewise, a word is an *action.* The moment you speak, you act. You create something. All words are creative.

And, of course, deeds are *actions.* The moment you do something, you create something. All doing is creative.

> Every prayer—every thought, every statement, every feeling—is creative.
>
> *—Book 1, page 12*

Your thought produces what you *create* with the energy that you are. So, too, does your word. And likewise, your deeds.

It is important to understand this difference between *thought* and mind, otherwise you may be tempted to imagine that they are one and the same.

CONCEPT #3·
Thought, Word, and Deed are the three levels of creation.

The mind does not create, but thought does. It has been said that you create in your mind. And that is true. You create in your mind *with the energy of your thought.*

> Thought is pure energy. Every thought you have, have ever had, and ever will have is creative.
>
> *—Book 1, page 54*

Once more then, thoughts, words, and deeds are the energies, or levels, of creation. Each level requires a different kind (vibration) of physical energy.

There is not a single person who has not experienced this truth. There are many who do not know they have experienced it. That is because some are creating consciously—with conscious awareness of the process—and some are living life unconsciously.

The key to our level of consciousness is our awareness of our Sponsoring Thought.

Exercise

Think of a time when you had a thought about something, and that thought came true. Discuss this in your group, or write a short statement about it below.

I remember a time when I had the following thought . . .

_____

_____

_____

_____

. . . then the following events occurred . . .

_____

_____

_____

_____

Now think of a time when you wished for something very hard, and it came true; or when you visualized something happening for you, then watched it happen to you, just the way you saw it in your Mind.

What did that feel like?

Did you think afterward that your own wish or visualization had something to do with things turning out the way they did?

What do you think today?

Conversations with God says that thought is creative. Do you believe this? If you do, and if someone asked, "How does thought create?"—what would you answer?

Write your answer below:

Review pages 91–93 in *Conversations with God.* Discuss this material at length in your group. If you are working through this companion alone, read those pages carefully. Then . . .

To pause and reflect

Assignment

Examine what role, if any, your thought about a thing has played in your life thus far.

Negative and positive outcomes are part of everyday life. All of us can easily come up with a long list of both from our lives. In the boxes below, list just a few on both ends of the scale, then see if you can remember what your thoughts were just before those events occurred.

List the five most recent "negative outcomes" you can remember (that is, "I got fired," "My spouse left me," "I got sick," "I didn't get the job," etc.).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now look at these items one by one, and see if you can remember—then list—the thoughts that you had before the outcome occurred.

Negative outcome # 1:

_____

The thought I remember having about it ahead of time:

Negative outcome #2:

_____

The thought I remember having about it ahead of time:

Negative outcome #3:

_____

The thought I remember having about it ahead of time:

Negative outcome #4:

_____

The thought I remember having about it ahead of time:

Negative outcome #5:

_____

The thought I remember having about it ahead of time:

List the five most recent "positive outcomes" you can remember.

1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____
5._____

Now let's turn the paradigm around and look at the positive side.

Positive outcome #1:

_____

The thought I remember having about it ahead of time:

Positive outcome #2:

_____

The thought I remember having about it ahead of time:

Positive outcome #3:

_____

The thought I remember having about it ahead of time:

Positive outcome #4:

_____

The thought I remember having about it ahead of time:

Positive outcome #5:

_____

The thought I remember having about it ahead of time:

Now, having finished this part of the assignment, explore the following questions. Discuss your answers in the group, and make a few notes on those answers in the space provided below. If you are using this companion individually, write your answers below.

1. *Which was easier: to remember and make a list of the positive or to remember and make a list of the negative experiences?*

_____

2. *What, if anything, does this tell you about yourself?*

_____

3. *You listed five experiences in each category. Giving each experience a weight of 20 percent, what percentage of your* negative *experiences was preceded by a thought or a fear of negative outcome?*

_____

4. *What percentage of the* positive *experiences that you listed was preceded by a thought or a joyful anticipation of positive outcome?*

_____

5. *Describe the role that "worry" plays in your life.*

I WORRY ABOUT THINGS:

☐ **A Lot** ☐ **A Fair Amount** ☐ **Once in a While** ☐ **Very Little**

Please elaborate on your answer, describing when you worry, if ever, and how that experience is for you.

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Describe the role that "joyful anticipation" plays in your life.

I JOYFULLY ANTICIPATE THINGS:

☐ **A Lot** ☐ **A Fair Amount** ☐ **Once in a While** ☐ **Very Little**

Please elaborate on your answer, describing when you joyfully anticipate, if ever, and how that experience is for you.

CHAPTER 1, SECTION 4
AND NOW, A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR . . .

The key to our level of consciousness is our awareness of our Sponsoring Thought. You may be aware of your present-day thoughts about things, but it is highly unlikely

that you are aware of the *first* thought you ever had about those things. Yet your first thought may be the most important thought you ever had on any subject, because in all probability it is your currently operating *Sponsoring Thought.* It sponsors, supports, and surrounds every other thought you have on a subject—until it does not.

This concept of Sponsoring Thought was introduced on page 12 of *Conversations with God.* It explains, at last, what people have been asking for years: If thought is creative, and if I change my idea and my thought about a thing, *why do I not* see *a change in what I am creating?*

As it turns out, it is *not enough to change your latest thought about a thing.* You must first deal with your Sponsoring Thought.

> . . . what you must know—and here is the secret—is that always it is the thought behind the thought—what might be called the Sponsoring Thought—that is the controlling thought.
>
> *—Book 1, page 12*

Your Sponsoring Thought is usually your first thought, the first thought—or certainly the first serious thought—you ever had about a thing. Now the most important thing for you to know about a Sponsoring Thought is that you cannot erase it or delete it. Once a Sponsoring Thought is there, it's *there.* Yet you can *add to* your Sponsoring Thought. That is, you can *enlarge it* to include *new data.* This companion hopes to lead you to your new data by taking you to your experiences. We are attempting here to enlarge or expand your Sponsoring Thoughts about everything. As you consider your present Sponsoring Thoughts, understand that there are only two kinds or types.

Concept #4

There are only two Sponsoring Thoughts: fear and love.

CwG says that there are only two places from which all thoughts spring. These are the two ends of the Great Polarity—the Alpha and the Omega—which allow the system that we call "relativity" to be. Every human thought, and every human action, is based in either love or fear.

These two energies are clearly defined in *CwG,* so there can be no mistaking them—and thus, no mistaking from which of them our ideas, decisions, and actions emerge. The polarity between love and fear forms the basis of the Law of Opposites, which law is obeyed by all of life in the physical realm.

Exercise

See if you can find where in *Conversations with God* the energies called Love and Fear are defined. Read the definitions again for greater clarity.

Now, in the table below, expand on these definitions from your own understanding.

FROM MY OWN LIFE I HAVE LEARNED THAT . . .	
Fear is the energy which . . .	**Love is the energy which . . .**

Not only are the actions of individuals based in love or fear, so, too, are decisions affecting business, industry, politics, religion, education, economics, and everything going on in all of society.

Review pages 19–21 in *Conversations with God.* Discuss this material at length in your group. If you are working through this companion alone, read those pages carefully. Then . . .

To pause and reflect

Assignment

Pick up a copy of today's newspaper. Select any ten headlines and make an analysis of these stories.

This is an exercise in seeing where the human race is "coming from" in the conduct of its affairs. Don't read just from the front page. Everyone knows that only the "bad" news makes the first page. Scan the paper throughout. Check the business section and the economic news. Take a look at the lifestyles page. Examine the sports news.

What percentage of the stories reflected actions, decisions, choices, or opinions based in Fear as CwG *and you have defined it, and what percentage was rooted in Love?*

Come prepared to discuss this in your next class, or make a note of it in your journal.

Now check any other source you think would be valuable in coming to a wider or broader view of the human experience. Pick up some magazines. See if you can get your hands on a history book. Look to see what percentage of the decisions, choices, actions, and opinions described in those publications fall into the above two categories.

Now take all of the items you felt would be placed in the category of Fear and look at them again. Ask yourself, if Love had been the Sponsoring Thought, what here would have changed; how else could this story have ended? (You will find this particularly fascinating with a history book.)

Make a notation in your journal and, if you are in a study group with others, bring this information to your next session for discussion.

CHAPTER 1, SECTION 5
LIKE WHAT IS UNLIKE WHAT YOU LIKE

The polarity between love and fear forms the basis of the Law of Opposites, which law is obeyed by all of life in the physical realm.

Conversations with God points to this law throughout its pages, explaining that without this law, we could not experience Who We Really Are. Knowing something and experiencing it are two different things. Spirit longed to know itself experientially. Conceptual awareness was not enough. Yet conceptual awareness—pure *knowingness*—is the state of things in the Realm of the Absolute. There is nothing else, save pure Being. Thus, the physical universe was created as a realm within which we might experience ourselves as that which we Really Are through the experiencing of that which we are not.

It is necessary first for us to know ourselves as that which we are *not* in order to experience That Which We Are.

> Once in the physical universe, you, My spirit children, could experience what you know of yourself—but first, you had to come to know the opposite.
>
> *—Book 1, page 27*

This is the next major theme tackled in the CwG text. The polarity between love and fear is not only defined, its purpose is explained in some detail. Thus, we arrive at . . .

CONCEPT #5

In the absence of that which you are not, that which you are . . . is not.

What is meant here is that in the physical realm, all things exist in holy relationship to each other. All things are defined by what they are not. Or, as the CwG text itself puts it, "you cannot know yourself as tall unless and until you become aware of short. You cannot experience the part of you that you call fat unless you also come to know thin.

Taken to ultimate logic, you cannot experience yourself as what you Are until you've encountered what you are not."

Exercise

Reread pages 24 through 28 of *Conversations with God.* If you are in a study group, have various members of the group take turns reading this section aloud. If you are studying at home, read the section aloud onto a tape. Play back the tape so that you can hear these words "read back" to you.

[Note: Sometimes it is easier to capture the meaning of the more complex passages in *CwG* by hearing the words, rather than reading them. As an aid in this process, you may wish to know that the entire text of *Conversations with God, Book 1* is on audio tape and is available in most book stores. It may also be ordered from Phoenix Audio in Beverly Hills, CA, Phone: (866) 773-7722. The questions were read by me, with the responses recorded by actors Ed Asner and Ellen Burstyn.]

Now do the following exercises in your journal, or, if you are in class, have the moderator or facilitator select group members to respond.

1. List several physical aspects of the many "things you are" (big, tall, short, small, light, dark, fast, slow, etc.)—in other words, describe yourself physically. Then, ask yourself how you know that. Do you have a little, round nose or a long, straight nose? Do you have a strong, square jaw or a gently curving one? Are your eyes "dark and mysterious" or bright and sparkling?

2. Now name three "things you are" that are not physical (compassionate, humorous, creative, patient, kind, etc.). Just list three things you know yourself to be. Then, look to see how you know that. Just think about this for a second.

To pause and reflect

Further Discussion:
Why "bad things" happen to "good people"

One of the hardest things to understand in life is why it has to be the way it is, that is, why so many "bad things" seem to happen to "good people." Yet if you stopped long enough and looked hard enough in the last exercise, you may have begun to see a pattern. A process. A "way things are" that begins to make sense.

There is a principle of metaphysics that is at play here. Briefly stated:

The moment you declare yourself to be anything, *everything unlike it will come into your life.*

This is the Law of Opposites to which *Conversations with God* refers. To understand this law better, read the "Parable of the Little Soul and the Sun" on pages 33–34 of *CwG.*

The Law states that you cannot "be" a thing in the absence of that thing which you are *not* being. You cannot be "warm" if you have never "been" cold. You cannot "be" up if you have never "been" down. If you declare yourself to be "patient," you can be sure that anything and everything unlike patience will creep into your life. You will be given ample opportunity to know and experience what you've declared yourself to be.

Have you ever declared that you were sick and tired of being short of cash, and that "from now on I am going to be *abundant,*" only to observe that you suddenly have more money problems than ever before? This is the Law of Opposites at work. You can depend on it every time.

Now the "cure" for this condition is not to wish that things would happen differently, but to react differently to the way things are happening. In fact, do not "react" at all, but rather, *create.*

"Reaction" and "creation" are the same word. Only the "c" has gotten confused. When you "c" things correctly, the problem goes away! The act of creation is "c-ing" things rightly. You must "c" *first.* Then you produce *creation* and not *reaction.*

We "react" to a situation when we act as we did once before. We "create" when we behave in a totally new way—as if nothing like this has ever happened before.

This new way of behaving (that is . . . "BE having") is a powerful response. You *respond,* rather than *react,* to what is occurring. You declare your responsibility (that is, your *response-ability!*) in the situation. When you do this, *you* decide how you are going to "have yourself be," rather than be-having in a way that does not speak of Who You Are . . . and who you choose to Be.

Never have a state of "beingness" that you do not choose to have. When you do, you are be-having badly! I suggest that you always be-have nicely. It's a far happier way to live. Still, remember this: never "should" on yourself.

To pause and reflect

Experiment

Think of some events that commonly occur in your life to which you generally "react" negatively. Use the chart below.

Now decide *ahead of time* how you are going to "create" the way you choose to "be" the next time these common occurrences take place.

This is an experiment in Conscious Creation.

We've started the list for you to give you some examples.

Things which Commonly Occur	MY USUAL REACTION when these things happen	MY NEW REACTION the next time they happen
Someone cuts me off in traffic		
I've been "ripped off" by an offer to which I sent good money and can't get it back		
My spouse (partner, friend), who is always late, is late again, causing me great inconvenience		

You may want to redraw this chart on a larger sheet of paper to give you more space for examples.

CHAPTER 1, SECTION 6
CAN YOU BELIEVE THE PROMISE OF GOD?

Never "should" on yourself.

This is the biggest lesson in chapter 1 of *Conversations with God.* There is nothing you "have to" be, do, or have in order to "please God." You were not given an opportunity

to change certain behaviors in the last experiment because you are "supposed to" change these behaviors. You were given the experiment to show you the *possibilities* of life, not the *demands.*

There *are* no demands in life. Not from God. And, truly, not from anyone.

> There are no "shoulds" or "shouldn'ts" in God's world. Do what you want to do. Do what reflects you, what re-presents you as a grander version of your Self.
>
> *—Book 1, page 38*

The concept of free will is a difficult one for many human beings to grasp. They *say* they believe in a God who has given them "free will," but they do not *really* believe it—and they certainly don't *act* like it.

One of the most challenging ideas in *Conversations with God* is the idea that no matter what we do, God doesn't give a damn. That is meant quite literally. No matter what we do, God doesn't give *a damn.*

ALL HE GIVES ARE BLESSINGS.

And that is because . . .

Concept #6

There is no such thing as "Right" and "Wrong."

Most of our lives we have been taught about an angry God, a retributive God who is going to "get us if we don't behave (that is, be-*have* . . . that is, have a state of *being-ness*) in a way that God approves.

According to *CwG,* this is a false teaching. "I have never set down a 'right' or 'wrong,' a 'do' or a 'don't,'" God says in the text. Do you think God means that? Can it be true? What is God's rationale for failing to give us any guidelines at all for how She wants us to live?

Exercise

Ask your study group to read pages 38–42 of *CwG* aloud. If you are studying at home, listen to the *CwG* audio book or record the section on a tape, then play it back

so that you can hear these words "read to you." In your journal or in your group, answer the following questions.

(If you are studying alone, please be *sure* to answer these questions *in writing* in your journal. Answering them "in your head" will not be nearly as effective. Trust me. If you are answering these questions out loud in your study group, go home and answer them again tonight in your journal. These may be among the most important questions posed to you in the entire *Companion.*)

1. How—if in any way at all—would your life have been different if you had come from a "Never should on yourself" philosophy the past twenty years? Would you have changed any of your choices?
2. Are you facing any choices now that this understanding might impact? In what way does it change or affect the options you are considering?
3. Can you think of any way in which this portion of the CwG message might change your life in the future?

Further Discussion:
What, then, is God's purpose?

If God has no preference in the matter of how we behave, if God has no restrictions, rules, or regulations by which we may undertake the living of our lives, then what, exactly, is God "up to"? Why has He put us here, and what does She expect from us, anyway? This the thinking mind begs to know. This the human race has pondered from the beginning of time. What is God's ideal? What is God's purpose?

Have you ever feared God? If so, who created in you your first fear of God? *CwG* focuses on this question many times throughout its text. It does so with exquisite articulation on page 43. Read the section beginning, "This is My plan for you. This is My ideal."

Many people do not believe it is possible that God would grant to human beings the gift of real free choice; many find it difficult to accept that God doesn't condemn us, no matter what we do. The paragraphs on the bottom on page 44 of *CwG* offer a gentle, yet

powerful, response to this thought. Reading them, we are filled with a great truth. It is time to step away from our fear of God.

To pause and reflect

Assignment

Copy the paragraphs on the bottom of page 44 of CwG *onto a poster and place it on your refrigerator or on the bathroom mirror—someplace you will see it every day.*

Ponder often the meaning and the message of the final sentence.

CHAPTER 1, SECTION 7
MY ULTIMATE FEAR IS THIS . . .

It is time to step away from our fear of God.

What stops us from believing the most wonderful thoughts we ever had about God is, of course, our fear of God. This fear is so great, so powerful, that it has caused us to make God out to be more like a devil than a deity. It is our fear that causes us not only to deny God, but to deny ourselves as Who We Really Are as well.

> . . . you have assigned devilish characteristics to God in order to convince yourself not to accept the God-like promises of your Creator, or the God-like qualities of the Self.
>
> Such is the power of fear.
>
> *—Book 1, page 53*

Fear of God produces fear of life itself. And fear of life produces absolute paralysis. Worse, fear can actually produce dreadful outcomes.

Concept #7

What you fear, you attract.

It is without a doubt demonstrably true that what you fear, you attract. What you fear most is what will most plague you. Your fear will draw it to you like a magnet. That is because—as *Conversations with God* explains beginning on page 54—emotion is the power that attracts, and fear is one of the strongest emotions.

Later in *CwG* is found the following statement: "Fear is the opposite of everything you are, and so has an effect of opposition to your mental and physical health. *Fear is worry magnified"* (*CwG,* page 188). Fear attacks your body at a cellular level. It is impossible to have a healthy body under conditions of continuing fear.

Exercise

Are there some things that you have feared in the past that have actually come to pass? What happened when these fears turned to reality? And what does any of that mean to you now?

Do you have any fears in your life right now? What are they? Using the chart below, take a close look at your fears and what you think would happen if they were realized. Sometimes simply looking closely at the outcomes you fear eliminates much of the fear itself.

Finish this exercise and include your comments about it in your journal. If you are in a study group, have the group stop for a moment and complete the form on the next page.

(ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: An extraordinary description of the mechanics of the mind and how our thoughts create our fears—and how to dissolve them—will be found in the latest book based on the CwG messages: *When Everything Changes, Change Everything.*)

LOOKING AT PAST FEARS

Three things I have feared in the past that have actually happened are:

1._____

2._____

3._____

An analysis of what occurred in my life as a result of these fears being realized shows that:

With regard to #1 above, after what I feared came true, my life changed in the following way:	With regard to #2 above, after what I feared came true, my life changed in the following way:	With regard to #3 above, after what I feared came true, my life changed in the following way:

LOOKING AT PAST FEARS

As I look at my life today, I see that I:

a) ☐ **Still have some fears** b) ☐ **Have pretty much eliminated fear from my experience**

If you checked box "a" complete the box below. If you checked "b," skip this box.

THREE THINGS I FEAR, AND WHAT I THINK WOULD HAPPEN IF THEY CAME TO PASS

I am afraid that_____

_____

If this happens, I believe that_____

_____

I am afraid that_____

_____

If this happens, I believe that_____

_____

I am afraid that_____

_____

If this happens, I believe that_____

_____

What, if anything, does the above analysis tell you about your fears?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you choose to make any decisions with regard to this?

To pause and reflect

Assignment

Keep a small notebook with you during the next week. Each time you notice yourself moving into fear, or feel apprehension about something, make an entry in the notebook.

Before turning in each night, create and fill out a form like the model below and on the next page. Bring the forms to your study group next week, or to your study session if you are working at home. In the group, or in your journal, share what this process has brought to you.

NIGHTLY FEAR REPORT:

Fill out one form for each entry in your notebook.

Today I noticed that I felt fear or apprehension around the following:

This is what I am afraid might happen:

If that *did* happen, here's what would probably happen next . . .

And if *that* happened, here's what would probably happen next . . .

And if *THAT* happened, here's what would probably happen next . . .

And if THAT HAPPENED, here's what would probably happen next . . .

And if ALL OF THIS HAPPENED, here's what would probably result:

So here is what I am ultimately afraid of . . .

Additional Inquiries
from chapter 1

In addition to the overarching concepts explored in the main sections of this companion, each chapter of *Conversations with God* contains many specific ideas I feel it is important to be familiar with if one is to have a rich understanding of this material. We therefore conclude each chapter in the *Companion* with a list of experiments or questions encouraging deeper exploration.

These questions drive to some of the finer points in the text. The thought and discussions that will result from exploring these questions cannot help but enhance your ability to apply the book's truths to real life, rendering this wisdom functional in your daily experience. That, of course, is the point of it all.

For study groups the questions form a perfect basis for regular interactive dialogues. If you are moving through this companion at home, responding to the questions in writing in your journal will greatly sharpen your comprehension.

1. *CwG* lists four methods by which God communicates with us. What are they?
2. How do you know when a communication is from God rather than some other source?
3. Why does God seem to talk to some people, and not others?
4. Asking God for anything is the "wrong" way to pray. Why?
5. Why does it appear that some prayers go unanswered?
6. God is the creator of all things. True or False?
7. What are the two great illusions of man?

8. All human actions are fueled by one of two emotions. What are they?
9. What is a Sponsoring Thought?
10. What is the soul's only desire?
11. Why did God create our relative world?
12. Explain the Law of Opposites.
13. Describe the concept of the Holy Trinity in metaphysical terms.
14. What are the three steps in the evolution of humankind?
15. What is the difference between relationships of the gross (that is, physical) level and relationships of the sublime level?
16. In the Parable of the Little Soul and the Sun, why was the soul surrounded by darkness?
17. There is only one reason to do anything. What is it?
18. Are the world's calamities and disasters God's punishment, or simply "bad luck"?
19. What does God want us to do about world starvation, violence, and injustice?
20. To the human soul, what is Hell?
21. Does God punish us for our sins?
22. Why didn't Jesus just heal everyone and get it over with?
23. Why does fear attract what is feared?
24. What are the Three Laws of the Universe?

CHAPTER 2

WHO IS GOD?

There are those who say that God is both definable and describable. Some say that there is no question about it . . . God is male. Others say, no, God is female. Because most humans are engaged in a constant effort to define themselves, most humans feel it is important to somehow define God. This wouldn't be so bad except that most people also need to believe that *their* definitions of God are the only definitions of God that are *correct.*

Yet God can neither be contained nor defined.

> If you think God looks only one way, or sounds only one way or is only one way, you're going to look right past Me night and day.
>
> *—Book 1, page 60*

This business of the identity and appearance and message of God has consumed the speculations of human beings everywhere from the beginning of time. Yet the answer to the mystery of who God is, the end of our eternal quest to know God, has been right in front of us all the time. God is . . . *everything.*

Concept #8

God is Life, and the Stuff Life Is.

For many people the above concept is not romantic enough, not holy enough, not religious enough or spiritual enough or, well, *Godly* enough. Yet *Conversations with God* makes it clear that the statement is nevertheless true. Page 60 of the text presents a particularly eloquent pronouncement in this regard.

Now this simple declaration—that God is Everything—has profound implications. For if God is everything, then there is nothing that is *not* God. No human being. No physical object. No experience or emotion. *No thing in our entire universe.*

And this declaration leads to an even more astonishing one. For if no thing in our universe is "not God," then God either judges and condemns a part of Himself or God judges and condemns no one and nothing.

Could this be possible?

What do *you* think?

Exercise

Below is a list of people, emotions, experiences, and events.

On a scale of 1 to 10, indicate how much you love (L-1, L-2, L-3, etc.) or condemn (C-1, C-2, C-3, etc.) these things and then how much you think God loves or condemns them.

Do not dance away from the second part of this question by saying, "I cannot judge this. Only God can judge." Just make an estimate of how much you think God loves or condemns them, based on what you think you know about all of this.

Try not to think too much when you do this exercise. That is, do not contemplate and cogitate. Just put down what your first response is. Let yourself be guided by your instant reaction. This will give you a good reading of what you think about all of these things when you consider them *without* thinking. In other words, what is your reflex reaction to these matters? Some people, when they approach this exercise, try to figure out what they are "supposed" to answer. Don't do that. You diminish the value of the exploration if you do. Let the exercise show you something about you.

PERSON, EMOTION, EXPERIENCE, OR EVENT	How much I love this or condemn this		How much I think GOD loves this or condemns this	
	L	C	L	C
1. Mother Teresa				
2. Beating people up				
3. Raw sex				
4. Genuine love				
5. Adolf Hitler				
6. Earthquakes				
7. Newborn babies				
8. Terminating pregnancy				
9. Jesus Christ				
10. Moses				
11. Krishna				
12. The Buddha				
13. Mickey Mantle				
14. Your father				
15. Compassion				
16. Selfishness				
17. The Holocaust				
18. Peddling drugs to kids				
19. Adults using drugs				
20. You				

Now consider this. Everything you scored under 10 in God's "L" column was an error. Everything you scored over 0 in God's "C" column was an error. God's unconditional love produces God's unconditional acceptance of even our worst "mistakes."

Further Discussion:
Does lack of condemnation mean lack of effect?

Be *very* careful as you review the exercise above and the information that precedes it, or it could lead to misunderstanding of how the universe works.

Does God's lack of condemnation mean that our actions—no matter what they are—will produce no negative effect? It does not. By lack of condemnation, God has not eliminated from life the Law of Cause-and-Effect. Everything you do (cause) creates a result (effect). That is the law, and there is no avoiding it.

And the effect that you create can reach beyond this particular lifetime. Long after you leave your present body you will feel the effect of all that you have caused. Not as a *punishment,* but simply as a *result.* Unlike punishments or retributions, these results are impersonal. They have nothing to do with you or the "rightness" or "wrongness" of anything you may have done, but merely with what *proceeds as a natural outcome* of what you have done.

If you drop a rock from a building, it will fall to the ground. This will happen not because the rock is "bad," or because dropping it was "wrong," but simply because the Law of Gravity produces that result.

That which is unlike God (Who is Total Love) is a denial of God. This denial of Who You Really Are causes a "falling away." This has nothing to do with punishment. It is a law. It is just what happens. You might call it *spiritual gravity.*

(That may be why, when we do something which is unGod-like, we are often advised by others to "consider the gravity" of what we have done!)

Breaking the law of spiritual "gravity" can produce "grave" results, that is, results that put us in our spiritual grave. We feel as though we are spiritually dead. We feel separated from God. (We can never be truly separated from God, for God is All That Is. Yet we can feel as though we are separated from God.) This is how we "feel about ourselves," and this feeling proceeds from every act that denies Who and What God Is (and thus, who and what We Are).

CwG teaches that the only Hell there is, is the feeling of separation from God. This is our spiritual death, for God is life and the stuff life is (the very point and the very concept we are studying in this chapter), and separation from life is felt as "death."

To be enlivened once more, we may have to be "born again" (reincarnated) in order to re-create ourselves anew. Or we may choose to simply remember (that is to say, become once again a member of) Who We Really Are.

To pause and reflect

Assignment

Ask yourself this week, in the quiet of your heart, how can it be possible that God does not condemn anything and anyone? What implications does this have for all humankind?

CHAPTER 2, SECTION 2
WHAT GOOD ARE VALUES?

The striking statements about "right" and "wrong" in *Conversations with God* could cause some people to abandon their personal value systems. Yet *CwG* says you will probably not benefit from doing this.

"Your ideas about right and wrong are just that—ideas," the text asserts. Yet they form the structure of your life, "and to lose them would be to unravel the fabric of your experience."

The book suggests that you may benefit from examining your values one by one. "Do not dismantle the house, but look at each brick, and replace those which appear broken, which no longer support the structure."

If you truly wish to render the wisdom in *Conversations with God* functional in your daily life, take a moment during the next few days and undertake a thorough examination of your present value system. See whether the bricks of the house you have built still support the structure. See whether your values—to which you most often respond automatically, without thinking—are continuing to serve you in every area. If there is

an area where a previously held value no longer supports your sense of Who You Are (much less who you Choose To Be), see what it would take to change it, and explore what you think would happen if you did. The forms below are designed to help you do so.

The Current Ideas I Hold About MONEY

How I experience these values serving me now: ___greatly ____somewhat ___not at all

If I altered my values on this, my new idea would be:

I think such a change would have the following effect on my life:

The Current Ideas I Hold About SEX

How I experience these values serving me now: ___greatly ____somewhat ___not at all

If I altered my values on this, my new idea would be:

I think such a change would have the following effect on my life:

The Current Ideas I Hold About GOD

How I experience these values serving me now: ___greatly ____somewhat ___not at all

If I altered my values on this, my new idea would be:

I think such a change would have the following effect on my life:

If you are moving through this material in a study group, you may wish to discuss what these charts reveal to you right now.

Many people have formed their values in certain ways because they believe that God wants them to do so. They hold a thought (usually given to them by others) that says that God needs us to obey His commands, and requires us to do so under penalty of everlasting damnation. The question in the lives of people who hold that thought is not whether their current value system serves *them,* but whether it serves God. Whether they are happy in their lives or not becomes irrelevant. The question is whether God is happy.

People who live within such a paradigm are often deeply threatened when they are told that God is happy no matter *what* you do. The idea that no one and nothing can "make God unhappy" is a foreign one, sounding strange to their ears. More than strange. Blasphemous. For the concept of an unhappy God is central to their theology. The concept of a God Who has needs, and Who becomes so displeased if those needs are not met that He lashes out and punishes us, is at the core of their belief system.

This construction of an angry, jealous, retributive God is held in the thoughts of more people than might be imagined. Yet *CwG* opens the door to a new kind of understanding. It introduces us to a new kind of God. It is a God most of us are grateful to finally meet. As a woman at one of my lectures said, "Thank you for showing me a God I can fall in love with."

And what is so different about this particular God?

Concept #9

God needs nothing, and therefore requires nothing from us.

The question of "right" and "wrong" drives to the heart of a larger inquiry. Does God have needs? For if there is an objective RIGHT and WRONG in the Universe, who would have created it? Who would have decided what they should be? And why?

Logic tells us that the only Being in the universe capable of making such choices and conjuring such creations would be God Herself. Yet if God made those decisions, that would seem to indicate that God has a preference in the matter, that God somehow has needs that must be met or desires that must be fulfilled, and that this is accomplished by the creation of RIGHT and WRONG, and by the commandment by God to His subjects that they had better *do* what is RIGHT and avoid what is WRONG, or *else.*

The final paragraph on page 64 of *CwG* says, however, that such demands are counterfeit, having nothing to do with God. "Deity *has* no needs," the text proclaims. "All That Is is exactly that: *all that is.* It therefore wants, or lacks, nothing—by definition."

Yet because God has no needs and wants nothing, does that mean God has no desires? It does not, for desires and needs are not the same thing—though many people have made them so in their lifetime.

A "need" is something you *must have.* Your happiness, security, peace of mind, and the like, depend on it. A desire is something you *choose to have.* It is a *preference.*

One chooses to have mashed potatoes rather than a baked potato. One does not need to have this. It is simply a preference. If one were served a baked potato by mistake, one could probably live with it, and actually, in many cases, be perfectly happy (depending upon how attached one is to having one's potatoes mashed).

How about you? Are you clear about the difference between desires and needs? Or do you have these categories confused in your life?

Exercise

Let's explore what it takes for you to be happy. This is a chance to see how you've "set it up," how you've constructed it in your reality. In the chart below is a list of the things many people feel they need in order to be happy, be safe, and have peace of mind. Check the appropriate column for those things you feel you *need, and those things you simply desire—and could be just as happy without.*

Common Ingredients for Happiness, Safety, and Peace of Mind	NEED IT	DESIRE IT
Someone who loves you in a sexual way, only you		
Challenging and creative work		
A beautiful home		
Lots of sex		
Some kind of work: any job		
Lots of money		
A halfway decent home		
A little bit of sex, for heaven's sake . . .		
At least enough money to pay bills		
The acceptance of others		

In God's world, there are no check marks in the column marked "NEED IT." How about in yours? Are there any check marks in that column? If so, what would it take to transform these "needs" into "desires" or "preferences"?

Changing what you imagine to be needs into what you experience as desires is the first step on the road to mastery. While Deity has no needs, Deity does have desires. These are outlined on *CwG,* page 65.

To pause and reflect

Experiment

Try moving through the next week of your life operating from a decision that you "need" absolutely nothing, that all of your former "needs" are now merely preferences or desires.

Carry a pocket notebook with you and every time you experience yourself "needing" something during the next week, make an immediate note of it and then write down what would happen to you if you did not get what you think you "need." Make your decision on what to do about meeting your "need" based on this analysis. At the end of the day, write down in what way, if any, this altered your experience.

Report back to the group next week, or make a detailed entry in your CwG journal.

CHAPTER 2, SECTION 3
YOU, TOO, CAN HAVE A DIALOGUE WITH GOD

Over and over again *CwG* makes the assertion that everyone may have a conversation with God. As noted in the introduction to this companion, the text of *CwG* is circular, winding back around to make the same points a number of times.

In its second chapter, the book again addresses the topic with which the entire dialogue opens on page 3—the matter of to whom God speaks. Please reread *CwG* from the bottom of page 66 to the middle of page 69. Then, consider this:

Concept #10
God talks to everyone.

Do not go to bed thinking you are "crazy" if you imagine that God has spoken directly to you, or that you are receiving communications directly from God in some other way. If you think you are, you probably are. Do not buy into the world's assessment that you are not "worthy" of hearing from God directly.

> This is the root of every problem you experience in your life—for you do not consider yourself worthy enough to be spoken to by God. Good heavens, how can you ever expect to hear My voice if you don't imagine yourself deserving enough to even be spoken to?
>
> *—Book 1, page 69*

It is important, though, to use caution, lest we decide and declare that *every* stray thought that enters our head is a Direct Message from the Divine. *CwG* answers the question of how to differentiate between stray thoughts that come from our ego and communications from God. Reviewing the bottom of *CwG* page 4 and the top of page 5 in *CwG* may be helpful here.

To pause and reflect

Assignment

This week, practice actually "talking to" God. Each night before retiring, take out a pad of paper and a pen and write down a question about your life on which you would like God's guidance or input.

In the morning, just after awakening and before you do anything else, reach for the pen and paper and write down the first thing that comes to you after rereading the question.

Do not try to "think" this answer. Simply write whatever comes to you. As soon as you start "thinking" about it, put the pen down. The first few times you do this you may only get a word or a phrase before your mind begins "getting in the way." As you continue with this practice you may find that larger gulps of information—entire phrases and whole sentences—are coming to you.

Now check these thoughts against the yardstick you were given in CwG *on pages 4 and 5. Write a brief report for delivery to your group next week, or make an entry in your journal, about what you observed.*

Additional Inquiries
from chapter 2

1. What gender is God?
2. What things generate God's disapproval?
3. What can human beings create that is outside of God's plan?
4. What is evil?
5. If there were such a thing as "sin," what would it be?
6. How badly does God want our worship and obedience?
7. What is the beginning of all creation?
8. What are the Five Attitudes of God?
9. What should we all do with our presently held personal values?
10. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John walked with Jesus and wrote his story. True or False?

CHAPTER 3

THE HOLY TRIAD

In order to understand our true nature as creative beings, it is necessary to comprehend the nature of God—the greatest creator of all—and then to really accept that we have been made *in God's image and likeness.*

Conversations with God says that God is a Triune Being.

> I am manifested as Three-In-One. Some of your theologians have called this Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
>
> *—Book 1, page 73*

Some of the world's religions balk at this three-level aspect of God, mainly because they hold that there is only one God. Yet it may be that this presents only a semantic difference. The fact is, God is One Being, and there is only One God. Yet this One God tells us It is divided into three parts, consisting of three distinct energies, and can be made manifest in many forms . . . including what we would call higher and lower aspects of Itself. This leads us to the next concept in *CwG.* For if human beings are made in the "image and likeness of God," then it stands to reason that . . .

Concept #11

Human beings consist of three distinct energies.

These energies are our creative tools. They are the divine devices with which God has made it possible for us to fashion the fabric of our experience. This has already been discussed in Concept 3.

(You will note that *CwG* often circles back into itself. That is, the text of the book is circular, returning to many of the same points over and over again, revisiting the same wisdoms in different forms.)

We are literally creating ourselves with these devices and re-creating ourselves anew in every moment of Now using these tools:

1. Thought
2. Word
3. Deed

Individually, as well as collectively, these creative energies have the power to produce our reality, which we might call an *experience.*

Once we understand this, we are far more able to understand how we got to where we are today as well as how to get to where we wish to be tomorrow. Until we understand this, we might imagine ourselves (and all others) to be victims of situations and circumstances beyond individual control. It could certainly look that way in daily life, which is why it is difficult for most people to believe in their own creative power.

Yet nothing exists in the world that did not first exist as pure thought.

If you have not experienced what you want in your life, it is not because God has failed to answer your prayers. Rather, it is because you have been thinking, speaking, or acting in contradiction to what you have been desiring.

Throughout your life, you are operating within the framework of an immutable law. This law states that how you think, speak, or act will be reflected in your reality. It *must* be. This *is the law of the universe.*

It does no good to think one thing and do another. Or to say one thing and think another. When you do this you are at cross purposes with yourself, and your results (experiences) will be very much a "mixed bag." It will be difficult to achieve any kind of consistency in your life and in what you are creating for yourself.

Most people's lives are inconsistent for this very reason. They can't seem to "get it all together." That is, they don't seem to be able to create consistency between what they think, say, and do often enough.

Exercise

Let's see how much consistency there is between what you think, say, and do. Following each of the words below, complete the statements that describe your thoughts, words, or deeds regarding them more often than not.

MONEY:

Most often what I think about money is

_____

Most often what I say about money is

_____

Most often what I do about money is

_____

SEX:

Most often what I think about sex is

_____

Most often what I say about sex is

_____

Most often what I do about sex is

_____

GOD:

Most often what I think about God is

_____

Most often what I say about God is

_____

Most often what I do about God is

_____

LOVE:

Most often what I think about love is

_____

Most often what I say about love is

_____

Most often what I do about love is

_____

TITHING (Giving 10 percent to church or charity):

Most often what I think about tithing is

_____

Most often what I say about tithing is

_____

Most often what I do about tithing is

_____

ONENESS:

Most often what I think about oneness is

_____

Most often what I say about oneness is

_____

Most often what I do about oneness is

_____

MY LIFE'S WORK:

Most often what I think about my life's work is

_____

Most often what I say about my life's work is

_____

Most often what I do about my life's work is

_____

WORLD HUNGER:

Most often what I think about world hunger is

_____

Most often what I say about world hunger is

_____

Most often what I do about world hunger is

_____

MY FAMILY (Spouse, children, or loved ones):

Most often what I think about my family is

_____

Most often what I say about my family is

_____

Most often what I do about my family is

_____

MY HEALTH:

Most often what I think about my health is

_____

Most often what I say about my health is

_____

Most often what I do about my health is

_____

MY BODY:

Most often what I think about my body is

_____

Most often what I say about my body is

_____

Most often what I do about my body is

_____

MY FUTURE:

Most often what I think about my future is

_____

Most often what I say about my future is

_____

Most often what I do about my future is

_____

You may wish to continue this exercise by creating your own list of additional words that carry meaning for you and completing the same statements about them. After you are done, open the process to discussion in your group.

To pause and reflect

Assignment

This week at home, answer the following questions about the above exercise in your personal journal, and come prepared to discuss them at the next class.

1. *What did you discover after doing the above exercise?*
2. *If there were any areas of inconsistency, what where they?*
3. *What did this reveal to you about yourself?*
4. *What commitment are you now willing to make to alter the inconsistency between what you think, say, and do on these subjects?*

5. When are you willing to begin?

6. How do you think your life would change if you did that?

CHAPTER 3, SECTION 2
HEY, WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

Chapter 3 of *Conversations with God* opens with a series of questions, the first of which is, *"When will my life finally take off? What does it take to 'get it together,' and achieve even a modicum of success? Can the struggle ever end?"*

The answer to these questions may very well be contained in the answers you gave to the six questions in the previous assignment. Those six questions revolve around your use of the three distinct energies that comprise your being.

It is important to understand that what you do with these energies, how you work with them, has everything to do with what is created in your life. (Not a little to do with it. *Everything* to do with it.)

CONCEPT #12

All you see in your world is the outcome of your idea about it.

The above statement is found on page 75 of *CwG.* It could be the most important statement in the book. If the statement is true, then it becomes extremely advantageous for us to go immediately to our highest thought about everything, and everyone, important to us.

Some people have not been in touch with their "highest thoughts" (much less their highest words or actions) for a long time. Cynicism, defensiveness, and fear have kept them from it. How about you?

EXERCISE

The exercise on pages 61–64 of this companion asked you to describe your usual thoughts, words, and actions surrounding certain subjects. That list of subjects is reproduced

below. Now, reviewing what you wrote, make an assessment of the statements you made about each subject.

Place a check in the column where the statements you made about the various subjects represent your highest thought, word, or deed with regard to them.

YOUR HIGHEST	THOUGHT	WORD	DEED
Money			
Sex			
God			
Love			
Tithing			
Oneness			
My Life's Work			
World Hunger			
My Family			
My Health			
My Body			
My Future			

In the above process it was possible to place thirty-six check marks on the page, twelve in each column. How many checks were you able to make? What percentage of your thoughts are your highest thoughts? What about your words? And your actions?

If you are like most people, this process may have shown you that, as *Conversations with God* says on page 77, "you've spent half your life unconscious. That is to say, unaware on a conscious level *of what you are choosing* in the way of thoughts, words, and deeds until you experience the aftermath of them. Then, when you experience these results, you deny that your thoughts, words, and deeds had anything to do with them."

Further Discussion:
Are you up to what you're "up to"?

All of life is a process of creation. We are now going to enter into a creative process as part of this companion.

Even if, in some instances, your thought, word, or deed with regard to the subjects above *was* your very highest, it is still possible now to create something even higher. For the true Master knows that when the highest state is reached, the "game" is over . . . unless an even higher state is imagined.

It is our "job," therefore, to continue imagining higher, and even higher, states of being—higher thoughts, words, and deeds—in order that we might continue creating ourselves anew in the next grandest version of the greatest vision ever we had about ourselves.

This is, to put it in one sentence, what we are all "up to" here. It is what *God* is up to. This is God "Godding!"

So, one more time . . . here is our list of subjects. In the space provided, create now your highest idea of what you can think, say, and do about each of these topics as they relate to your life.

MONEY:

Most often what I think about money is

_____

Most often what I say about money is

_____

Most often what I do about money is

_____

SEX:

Most often what I think about sex is

_____

Most often what I say about sex is

_____

Most often what I do about sex is

_____

GOD:

Most often what I think about God is

_____

Most often what I say about God is

_____

Most often what I do about God is

_____

LOVE:

Most often what I think about love is

_____

Most often what I say about love is

_____

Most often what I do about love is

_____

TITHING (Giving 10 percent to church or charity):

Most often what I think about tithing is

_____

Most often what I say about tithing is

_____

Most often what I do about tithing is

_____

ONENESS:

Most often what I think about oneness is

_____

Most often what I say about oneness is

_____

Most often what I do about oneness is

_____

MY LIFE'S WORK:

Most often what I think about my life's work is

_____

Most often what I say about my life's work is

_____

Most often what I do about my life's work is

_____

WORLD HUNGER:

Most often what I think about world hunger is

_____

Most often what I say about world hunger is

_____

Most often what I do about world hunger is

_____

MY FAMILY (Spouse, children, or loved ones):

Most often what I think about my family is

_____

Most often what I say about my family is

_____

Most often what I do about my family is

_____

MY HEALTH:

Most often what I think about my health is

_____

Most often what I say about my health is

_____

Most often what I do about my health is

_____

MY BODY:

Most often what I think about my body is

_____

Most often what I say about my body is

_____

Most often what I do about my body is

_____

MY FUTURE:

Most often what I think about my future is

_____

Most often what I say about my future is

_____

Most often what I do about my future is

_____

To pause and reflect

Experiment

Throughout the next week, see if you can call forth your Highest Thought about some of the things going on around you. Carry a small spiral notebook with you and make a note of the occurrences of your life—and the thoughts you now choose to have about them. See if this in any way changes your words and actions—and thus, your life.

CHAPTER 3, SECTION 3
BIG DIVIDENDS FROM SMALL CHANGE

What you did in the previous experiment is to enter into the highest form of creation. You have been deliberately re-creating yourself anew, using the three tools, or energies, with which God has equipped you. The exercise in Concept 12 of this chapter suggests that it is possible to think thoughts, say words, and undertake deeds that are not reactions, but creations. *Deliberate* creations. It is by this process that you change your life.

The recommendation of *CwG* on this subject could have been the directions for that previous exercise.

> Go to your Highest Thought about yourself. Imagine the you that you would be if you lived that thought every day. Imagine what you would think, do and say, and how you would respond to what others do and say.
>
> Do you see any difference between that projection and what you think, do and say now?
>
> *—Book 1, page 77*

The next concept we will explore relates directly to Concept 12. All you see in your world is the outcome of your idea about it. You have created, and have *been* creating, your entire reality. So if there is presently anything in your reality you do not now choose, *choose again.*

What is important for you to understand is that you *do* have the opportunity to do so. Nothing remains the same. Nothing.

Not even God.

CONCEPT #13

All conditions are temporary. Nothing stays the same.
Which way a thing changes depends on you.

Take a close look at what's being said here. Let's explore it together.

Exercise

Make a list of "Things That Have Changed" in your life, and next to each change write an analysis of whether you experienced yourself as being at the effect of that change, or as being the conscious creator of it. We've begun the list for you, to give you a jump start. Add to this list things that have changed that only you could know about—things that are specific to your life.

Circumstances in My Life Which May Have Changed	Check here if this change is one which you deliberately created	Check here if this change is one which you "watched happen"
MY LIFE WORK		
The 1st time this changed	☐	☐
The time after that	☐	☐
Last time	☐	☐
MY LIFE PARTNER		
The 1st time this changed	☐	☐
The time after that	☐	☐
Last time	☐	☐
MY HEALTH		
The 1st time this changed	☐	☐
The time after that	☐	☐
Last time	☐	☐
MY PLACE OF RESIDENCE		
The 1st time this changed	☐	☐
The time after that	☐	☐
Last time	☐	☐
MY INCOME		
The 1st time this changed	☐	☐
The time after that	☐	☐
Last time	☐	☐
MY CITY'S MAYOR		
The 1st time this changed	☐	☐
The time after that	☐	☐
Last time	☐	☐
MY . . . (add to this list yourself)	☐	☐
	☐	☐
	☐	☐

Further Discussion:
The secret of improving your quality of life

For most people the idea that change is inevitable in life is neither a new idea nor a startling one. What may be startling, however, is the degree to which we *control* or *create* the changes in our lives.

To a very large degree it could be said that *the quality of your life will depend upon the degree to which you control or create the changes that affect it.*

The exercise above was designed to give you an at-a-glance assessment of how you have been doing in this regard.

To pause and reflect

Assignment

Throughout the upcoming week keep a record of everything that changes in your life. Appointments, dates, conditions . . . it doesn't matter. Just keep track of what is changing.

Then, next to each change you have noted, make an entry that denotes whether you were active in creating that change or found yourself merely experiencing the effect of it.

At the end of the week calculate what percentage of the time you were in each category. Bring this information to your class next week, or write it in your journal.

CHAPTER 3, SECTION 4
CHANGE YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE

Some people may choose now to change their purpose in life, realizing that the purpose of their life is to change (that is, to evolve).

Let me say that again, because it may be a new idea to you. *The purpose of life is to change.* Perhaps you have never thought of it this way. Nevertheless, this is the way it is.

Now to some people this is the most exciting statement ever made. To others, it is the most depressing, because they have spent their whole lives trying to stay the same, to achieve *stability.* They have been seeking *changelessness* in a Universe that knows nothing about such a condition, and therefore cannot produce it.

As I pointed out earlier, even God never stops changing. And to many, this could be the most depressing truth of all. For many of those who point to an ever-changing world as evidence of the chaos (and evil) in life often point to a Never-Changing God as their port in the storm, their refuge and their strength. The idea that God, too, is ever changing is to these people more than a discouraging thought. It is a blasphemy. Their deepest beliefs are rooted in the thought that God is the Great UNchanged.

Yet *Conversations with God* tells us that not only is God ever-changing, but this constant change is the *point of all life.* Or, to put this another way . . .

Concept #14

The purpose of the soul is evolution.

Change, of course, can produce what some people call "bad things." Yet change—evolution—is inevitable. This may help to explain why "bad things happen to good people," as some put it.

Without a doubt the most difficult aspect of this concept of ourselves as the creator of our own reality is the trouble many people have understanding why we, why *anyone,* would bring so-called negative experiences into creation.

A question I am asked with understandable frequency has to do, for instance, with the little children of the world. "Why would an innocent little child call upon itself physical torture and abuse, sexual molestation, and other terrible experiences such as kidnapping and even death? Surely you cannot be saying these children are creating that for themselves!"

We can only grasp this fine point of metaphysics through a deeper understanding of Concept 14.

> The soul is very clear that its purpose is evolution . . . it is not concerned with the achievements of the body or the development of the mind. These are all meaningless to the soul.
>
> The soul is also very clear that there is no great tragedy involved in leaving the body. In many ways the tragedy is being in the body. So you have to understand, the soul sees this whole death thing differently.
>
> *—Book 1, page 82*

Our comprehension is further enhanced when we begin to see how the Law of Opposites plays its effect in our lives, assisting us in creating, being, and experiencing Who We Really Are.

This law, explained in detail in several sections of *CwG* and discussed in chapter 1, section 5 of this companion, holds that in the Realm of the Relative, which we have co-created and in which *we* reside, nothing can be anything without its exact opposite. (See Concept 5, page 35.)

Many people live an entire lifetime and fail to embrace this extraordinary wisdom. Yet *Conversations with God* confronts us with it again and again, circling back around to it even as we have done here, urging us to delve into its truth, experience its mystery-solving clarity, and thus step into gratefulness for *every* life experience. For the Soul must ultimately experience "all of it" in order to experience itself as *any* of it.

> How can it be up if it has never been down, left if it has never been right? How can it be warm if it knows not cold, good if it denies evil? Obviously, the Soul cannot choose to be anything if there is nothing to choose from.
>
> *—Book 1, page 84*

Exercise

Make a list of the last three major decisions you made about your life, or the last three things you decided about yourself (I am good, I am abundant, I am loved, etc.). Now, going back in your memory, think of the first few experiences that life brought you in the immediate aftermath of your decision.

A CHOICE I RECENTLY MADE	THE FIRST THING I CAN REMEMBER WHICH HAPPENED AFTER THAT
CHOICE #1	CHOICE #1
CHOICE #2	CHOICE #2
CHOICE #3	CHOICE #3

To pause and reflect

Assignment

This week, look to see how the Law of Opposites plays its effect in your life by continuing the above exercise all week. List the important choices you make this week, then fill out column 2. See if you can begin to identify any apparently opposing forces as friendly energies, bringing you golden opportunities to decide and declare, become and express, experience and fulfill your next grandest idea of Who You Really Are.

CHAPTER 3, SECTION 5
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE, ANYWAY?

When I was a small boy I was the kind of youngster some people would call a "smart alec," and my father had occasion to ask me innumerable times, "Who do you think you *are,* anyway?" I've spent the rest of my life trying to answer that question.

You are trying to answer that question, too—whether you know it or not. That is really the only question in life. Who do you think you are, anyway? Of this I can assure you: who you *think* you are is exactly who you will wind up being.

Concept #15

You are who you think you are. You are your own thoughts about yourself, made manifest.

Now there may be somewhat of a "gap" between who you think you are and Who You Really Are.

(Whenever those last four words appear in the book *Conversations with God,* you will notice they are always capitalized. That is because Who You Really Are is a Being of such magnitude, any reference to that deserves to be capitalized.)

This gap is the difference between your thought about you and God's thought about you. If you thought about you the way God thinks about you, you'd smile a lot. But most people do not think of themselves the way God thinks of them; they do not see

themselves the way God sees them, and they do not conceive of themselves as being the way God *knows* them to be.

It is as God Herself put it in *CwG:* "If I told you that you are born of God—that you are pure Gods and Goddesses at birth—pure love—you would reject me. All of your life you have spent convincing yourself that you are bad. Not only that you are bad, but that the things you want are bad. Sex is bad, money is bad, joy is bad, power is bad, having a lot is bad—*a lot of anything* . . . No, no, my friend, you may not be very clear about many things, but about one thing you are clear: you, and most of what you desire, are bad."

Because so many people hold these thoughts, I thought it important to devote one very small section of this companion to one very large message. This is that section. You will note that it has no exercises, no assignments, and no experiments to suggest. Just a little wisdom from *CwG* itself about Who You Really Are.

If you are confused about this, why not take a look at how God sees you?

> You are goodness and mercy and compassion and understanding. You are peace and joy and light. You are forgiveness and patience, strength and courage, a helper in time of need, a comforter in time of sorrow, a healer in time of injury, a teacher in times of confusion.
>
> You are the deepest wisdom and the highest truth; the greatest peace and the grandest love. You are these things, and in moments of your life you have known yourself as these things. Choose now to know yourself as these things always.
>
> *—Book 1, page 87*

To pause and reflect

Additional Inquiries
from chapter 3

1. We have made a covenant with God regarding the creation process. What is our role in this covenant?
2. The creation process involves aligning three aspects of ourselves to produce a result or experience. What are these three aspects?
3. What is the Divine purpose behind our forgetting Who We Really Are?
4. What does God get out of this process of our re-creating Who We Really Are?
5. What are the first steps to having your life "take off"?
6. Name some of the ways *CwG* says your life would improve if you followed these steps.
7. How do you call forth (re-create) yourself?
8. The best way to handle a painful experience in life is to . . .
9. What is the soul's desire?
10. The soul seeks only good feelings. True or False?
11. What is result of our thinking of ourself as "bad"?
12. It is prideful and non-beneficial to the soul to think of ourselves as good or Godly. True or False?

CHAPTER 4

STOP TRYING TO LEARN

Not long ago I was pulled aside by a young woman attending one of my lectures. "How can I learn more about myself?" she asked me with great earnestness, then explained, "I am on a journey of self-discovery."

"No, you're not," I replied. "Your life has nothing to do with self-discovery. And you have nothing to learn."

"I don't?" she echoed, a bit taken aback.

"No, you don't," I assured her. Then I told her to stop looking all over the place for "the answers"—whatever *they* are—and start looking for the questions—the inquiries that are most important in her life—and give *them answers.*

(I am reminded here of a story I heard about Gertrude Stein on her death bed. The room was filled with family and friends as she looked up in one of her final moments and cried plaintively, "What is the *answer?*"

Silence hung heavy.

"In that case," said Gertrude Stein, "what is the question?")

Concept #16

Life is not a process of discovery; it is a process of creation.

Our lives seem dotted with questions from beginning to end. And for most of us life has become a process of seeking to discover the answers. We say that we are trying to "find ourselves," that we are "truth seekers," and so forth. Yet in this, sincere as we may have been, we may have had it all backward.

> You do not live each day to discover what it holds for you, but to create it. You are creating your reality every minute, probably without knowing it.
>
> *—Book 1, page 91*

When we decide to *provide* answers rather than seek them, we have graduated from Beginning Student to Intermediate. The next step is Advanced Student. Then . . . Master.

Of course, I have made these rankings up. I use them simply to make a point. The place God would have us occupy in our Universe is the place called Creator. Anything less than that is a lie about us.

Exercise

Turn to page 91 in *CwG* and review the Ten Point Path to Realization of Self as Creator. Take turns reading these aloud in your study group, or, if you are studying alone, read them into a tape recorder and play them back so that you can hear them read to you.

Note: You may wish to play this tape back every day. For study groups: you may find it beneficial and inspirational to read these ten points aloud before some of your meetings as a part of your opening ritual.

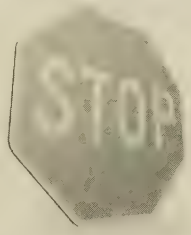
Further Discussion:

Hold fast to your original creative thought

Committing these ten steps to memory will allow you to "wake up." You will no longer be sleepwalking through your life, but will be consciously aware of what you are thinking, saying, and doing—and of the impact that is having in your life.

You will then have a chance to change anything you are thinking, saying, or doing that is not in harmony with what you choose to call forth in your life. *CwG* invites you to "throw all negative thoughts out of your mental constructions. Lose all pessimism. Release all doubts. Reject all fears. Discipline your mind to hold fast to your original creative thought."

You can train yourself to do this. "Look," says *CwG,* "how well you have trained yourself not to do it."



To pause and reflect

Experiment

Using the same notebook you used in your last experiment, begin a diary of any questions about life (they can be "important" or "not important," it doesn't matter) that come to you as you walk through your days this week. Call this your Creation Diary. At the end of each day, review this list of questions and give each of them an answer. If you don't know the answer (careful, here comes the powerful part), *make one up.* Give the question the answer that best suits you.

Write out your answers. (Putting them in writing gives them strength, power.) Make a commitment to turn these ideas into reality with every new thought, word, and deed that issues forth from you, beginning the very next day.

Experiment—Part II

As the second part of this week's experiment, try moving through the next seven days *without asking anyone else any questions at all.* See if it is possible for you to move through your life without ever asking anyone a question again.

This could be a spectacular affirmation of the Truth that you have within you: enormous knowledge, understanding, and power, as well as the ability to call forth from sources outside of yourself whatever data and information you need to activate your inner resources and create whatever you choose.

HERE'S A TIP: You can cause the Universe to bring you any information you need by simply turning questions into "commands."

Examples:
"What time is it?" becomes *"Please tell me what time it is."*
"Do you know the way to San Jose?" becomes *"I wish to know the way to San Jose, please."*

You will discover (perhaps much to your astonishment) that the world will jump to give you what you call forth in this way. (Especially when you do so quietly and nicely.)

Next week, come to the study group ready to share your experience. What did it bring up for you? If you are studying *CwG* alone, make an entry about this in your journal.

Additional Inquiries
from chapter 4

1. What is the one way we can take the wrong path and not reach our goal of returning to God?
2. Why is man's continuing attempt to "find himself" and to discover the secret of life doomed to failure?
3. What are the three aspects of our being involved in creation?
4. What is the relationship between knowing and gratitude?
5. Why is it undesirable to condemn events or actions you don't like?
6. Why do we so often create events that are not what we want?
7. What is the best way to avoid creating what you don't want?

CHAPTER 5

HOW GOD TAKES COMMAND

God is "in command" of the entire Universe and all of life. Of this there is no question. On this every religion in the world agrees. (It is probably the only thing on which every religion in the world agrees!) The real question is, how does God "take command"? How does She exercise Her Absolute Power? How does He demonstrate His Supreme Authority? On this, many of the world's religions disagree.

CwG provides us with a startling new answer to these questions. God, the book says, *does not take command at all.* That is, God is "in command" without commanding.

> Who would I command? Myself? And why would such commandments be required? Whatever I want, is, n'est ce pas? How is it therefore necessary to command anyone?
>
> *—Book 1, page 95*

To this answer God adds God's own stunning question: "How could I wish something to be so *so badly that I would command it,* and then sit by and watch it not be so? What kind of a king would do that? What kind of a ruler?"

The answer is none, of course. God declares that He is neither a king nor a ruler, but simply, and awesomely, the Creator. And, as the Creator, God performs one function,

and one function only. She creates, creates, and keeps on creating. That is, presumably, spectacular enough. God does not need to rule over His creations with an iron hand in order for Her to get some satisfaction out of it. All of which leads us to . . .

Concept #17

God commands no one.

This is perhaps one of the most striking concepts in a book full of striking concepts. It is a remarkable revelation that allows the human race to at last remove itself from the place of fear with regard to God.

Exercise

In a roundtable discussion in your study group, or in your journal, answer the following questions.

1. Is it possible that this astonishing statement is true?
2. If there are no Ten Commandments, what did Moses take to his people? Why and how did these become interpreted as commands from God?
3. How can the world live without the Ten Commandments? What would stop us from doing "bad things" if there were no injunctions against them?
4. If God is the All-In-All, the Sum of Everything, the Alpha and the Omega, who would God be punishing if the Ten Commandments were not kept?

The central issue in our relationship with God is this: Just what kind of relationship is it?

Is God our Lord and Master, whom we must obey under penalty worse than death? Or is God a different kind of Master, who wants and needs nothing from us, loves us without condition, and whose greatest joy is allowing us to create—*anything we wish?*

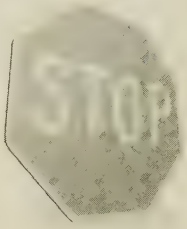
Is it possible that God really has no preference in the matter? Many people believe that God does have a personal preference regarding the way we live our lives, the choices we make, and the paths we walk. What do you think?

Let's play a little game. Let's imagine that God does have preferences, and now let's further imagine that *we know what they are.* (This is the position taken by most of the world's organized religions, of course.)

Exercise

Below is a list of common human experiences and activities. In the columns to the right, list your own personal preferences with regard to these experiences or activities, and then, what you imagine God's preference to be.

THE EXPERIENCE	My personal preference with regard to this	God's preference with regard to this
You are invited to enjoy an unexpected romantic sexual experience with a single person to whom you are very attracted.		
You help someone to "find God," and they are so grateful that you are offered $1,500 as their personal gift of appreciation.		
You and your lover have created a pregnancy together. Neither of you wants a child right now.		
You open up a magazine and find that it contains some very racy pictures of people with no clothes on engaging in sexual acts.		
You are offered a chance to have a couple of drinks at a party with some friends.		
You are offered a chance to have a couple of puffs of marijuana at a party with some friends.		
You are offered "big money" to write an article about the problems of the poor.		



To pause and reflect

Assignment

This week, keep a record of the judgments you make. Create a small Judgment Journal in a notebook and make an entry each night, allowing yourself to remember all of the judgments you made that day about any other person, place, or thing. Then make a list of the judgments you made about yourself, or something that you were being, doing, or having. Be honest. And what ever you do, don't start judging yourself for making judgments. Just notice when you do, and enter that in your journal.

Bring your Judgment Journal to class next week and have a group discussion about this. Make a list in class of any judgments you all have in common. Then talk about what you feel God's judgments are about these things.

CHAPTER 5, SECTION 2
THE RENUNCIATION OF RENUNCIATION

There have been many ideas floating around the past umpteen thousand years about the Path to God, the Road to Enlightenment, the Way to Nirvana, and the holy life of truly holy men. One of the most prevalent of these ideas is that renunciation is The Way.

Actually, it is not.

At least, not necessarily.

Of course, *any* way you take is the way *to* take if it gets you where you wish to go. But one of the major messages of *CwG* is that there is no "right way" to go, no "right path" or "wrong path," but only the path that you're on.

This means that the practice of renunciation as most people understand it (in which we renounce or "give up" all earthly passions and physical indulgences) is not the only way to enlightenment, nor is it even necessary in order to achieve enlightenment. It is simply one way, *a* way. It is simply one person's preference, one group's choice. Just as the Catholic Church is one person's preference, one group's choice. Just as the Baptist Church. And the Jewish faith and teachings. And the Buddhist philosophy. And the Tao.

And so on and so forth, so on and so forth, so on and so forth . . . seemingly forever.

Our choices are unrestricted, our opportunities are unlimited, our paths are unending.

This may come as news to many who feel that renunciation is the only effective way to achieve mastery.

> . . . self denial is not required. A true Master does not "give up" something. A true Master simply sets it aside, as he would do with anything for which he no longer has any use.
>
> *—Book 1, page 100*

There is a huge difference, of course, between stepping away from something or "setting it aside" and giving it up. There is an enormous shift in consciousness that takes place when we move from resisting something (our most passionate urges and desires) to accepting that something is there—and then simply not choosing it. Resisting our impulses and deepest urges never works for very long, for it is a great truth that . . .

Concept #18

What you resist persists.

In fact, the irony of life is that the very act of resisting something *places it there.* This is so because you cannot resist something that does not exist. Therefore, your very resistance to something is an announcement to the Universe that *you believe it is there.* And, of course, what you believe is what will be made manifest in your reality.

Exercise

Can you think of anything in your life so far that began in your experience as a "negative" thing, only to have the negativity that was attached to it drop away as soon as you dropped your resistance to it?

See if you can make a list of such things below and, if you are in a study group, share it with the others. I've named a few of my own here, just to help you get started.

Initially negative experiences seemed not so negative at all as soon as I stopped resisting them:

1. Spinach
2. Going to the Dentist
3. Paying Bills
4. Listening to my father's repeated "war stories"
5. Walking on the beach in open-toed clogs or "flip-flops"
6. Having my blood drawn
7. Sleeping with someone who snores
8. Reading a massive, I mean a really massive, book
9. Shopping with someone who doesn't know what she wants
10. Waiting, especially in lines that seem to stall as soon as I get in them

Your list, continued . . .

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

In my life I have learned to turn these formerly negative experiences into positive ones, simply by changing my point of view about them. I have stopped resisting, and, like magic, the negativity stopped persisting. The exterior condition itself may not have changed, but *my experience of it did.*

Not only have I stopped resisting so-called negative experiences, I have also stopped resisting my passions by calling them "bad." I have stopped judging myself for having them, stopped making myself wrong. If my passion for a thing comes into play in my life, I simply notice what I have a passion for, then look to see if it serves me to indulge that passion right now—or ever.

> Remember, you are constantly in the act of creating yourself. You are in every moment deciding who and what you are. You decide this largely through the choices you make regarding who and what you feel passionate about.
>
> *—Book 1, page 100*

Some passions are what you would label "good," depending upon what it is you are trying to do or be. A person may be said to have a "passion for God," for instance, or a passion to help others. Passions themselves, therefore, are not to be avoided. Indeed, it is passion that drives the engine of the human experience.

Exercise

List ten things for which you have had an enormous passion in your life. Dig into your past, not just your present moment, to remember some of these passions. Now, on the form below, indicate which passions serve you (help you to achieve a goal; bring you joy, goodness, benefit) today, and which do not.

Conversations with God says that words are the least reliable form of communication. When doing this exercise, look to see how you define the words "joy," "goodness," and "benefit." These can be slippery terms. Make sure you agree with yourself about these words and what they mean before you start the exercise. In fact, make yourself specifically *define* them as the first part of the exercise. Now you're ready to make a statement your heart says is true.

Passions I have, or have had, in my life	Served me then (check here)	Serves me now (check here)	Will probably serve me in the future (check here)

Further Discussion:
What does "mastery" require?

Earlier in this section I used the phrase "renunciation as most people understand it." That choice of words was deliberate and meaningful.

What were you told you had to renounce in order to be spiritually evolved?

Most people understand renunciation as "renouncing" something. That is, condemning something, or at the very least "giving it up," because it is "bad," "not okay," or "unhealthy" spiritually or physically. Yet the true Master understands the lighter nuance of the word as it is applied to spiritual process. To the Master, there is never any "renouncing" of anything in the sense of giving it up, and there certainly is never any condemning of anything—for the Master condemns nothing. *("Judge not, and neither condemn . . .")*

As *CwG* points out, to condemn a thing is to condemn God, for nothing that has been created has been created in God's absence. Thus, in condemning the creation you condemn the creator.

So the Master does not condemn, nor does the Master have the experience of "giving up" a thing. To the Master, the act of renunciation is a setting aside of something,

as one sets aside the toys of one's youth when one becomes an adult. It is a stepping away from something, as one avoids a moving train, or a construction site, or a manhole. One doesn't "give up" the manhole in any sense. One simply and merely steps around it.

To pause and reflect

Assignment

This week, make a list of all you have stepped away from in your life so far, all that you have set aside. This may be persons, places, or things. Everything from the toys of your youth to the friendships that no longer serve you to the habits you have broken.

Do not list things that have been taken from you, but rather, only those things you have consciously set aside, stepped away from.

Then, after making this list, write in a column next to each item the reason you set this item or experience aside, and how it has served you to do so.

Finally, make a second list before next week of all that you now see no longer serves you in your life—no longer is a declaration of Who You Are—and bring that list to your study group (or write it in your journal), together with your proclamation of when you intend to step away from that or set it aside.

CHAPTER 5, SECTION 3
EXPECTING NO MORE EXPECTATIONS

To the "renunciate," passion is everything. This is often a surprising revelation to those who would study to become Masters. Yet to the Master it is obvious.

> Passion is the love of turning being into action. It fuels the engine of creation. It changes concepts to experience. . . . Never deny passion, for that is to deny Who You Are, and Who You Truly Want to Be. The renunciate never denies passion—the renunciate simply denies attachment to results.
>
> *—Book 1, page 101*

To live your life without expectation—without the need for specific results—*that* is freedom. That is Godliness.

Concept #19

Passion is not expectation, and expectation is not passion.

To "have a passion" for something does not mean one necessarily has to have an expectation about it. "Having a passion" for something is what drives us to an experience. It is what motivates us, inspires us. "Having an expectation," on the other hand, generally ruins whatever we may have had a passion for.

(In the human sexual experience this is particularly, and perhaps most obviously, true—which should tell us something about expectation and passion in *all of life.*)

Exercise

If expectation of a particular result were removed from the equation, what reason would you have to be, do, or have anything?

In the boxes below, list the last three things you can remember consciously choosing to be, do, or have. Then fill in your reasons.

Make an effort not to get into judgment about these things—or be secretive with yourself. Let your mind reveal to you all of your recent hopes, dreams, and desires . . . even those that you might not necessarily openly share with the world (sexual things that you choose to be, do, or have, for instance, as well as things associated with your career, family, or lifestyle). Give yourself permission to be candid. This is about revealing something to yourself about yourself.

Three things I've recently chosen to BE	What I expected might happen as a result of my being this	A reason I could create to be this if there *were* no particular result
1.		
2.		
3.		

Three things I've recently chosen to DO	What I expected might happen as a result of my doing this	A reason I could create to do this if there *were* no particular result
1.		
2.		
3.		

Three things I've recently chosen to HAVE	What I expected might happen as a result of my having this	A reason I could create to have this if there *were* no particular result
1.		
2.		
3.		

Further Discussion:
The question that will change your life

There is only one reason to be, do, or have anything, and that is to announce and declare Who and What you think you Are, and Who and What you Choose to Be. This point is made over and over again in *CwG* (and repeatedly in this companion).

The point of life is to create Who and What You Are, and then to experience that.

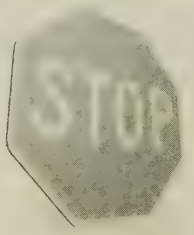
You are doing that right now, whether you know it or not. Your idea about yourself is very powerful. It dictates *all* choice—every choice you have made in your life. And ever *will* make.

For instance, if you think you are afraid, you will make choices that reflect that idea about yourself. If you think you are not afraid, you will make other choices. If you think you are angry, you will make choices that reflect that idea about yourself. If you think you are not angry, you will make another choice, and so on.

Now the trick to changing some of your longest-held behaviors is to change your idea about Who and What You Are in certain circumstances.

If you can't do that, there is a secondary route (something like a smaller, slower highway that still "gets you there") that you might take. Simply ask yourself what choice you might make if you did *not* think you were angry, afraid, sad, or whatever right now. Say to your inner self, "Look, I know that you are this right now . . . but, just for the sake of exploration, what choice would you make right now if you were not?"

This is a transformational question that will change your life.



To pause and reflect

Experiment

The next time you become miffed or angry about something, ask yourself what you would choose to be, do, or have if you were *not* angry.

Use this technique any time you are experiencing yourself in a way that in the past has caused you to make choices that have not served you.

Keep a diary of when you have used the If-You-Were-Not technique this week, and what happened after you used it. Come prepared to discuss this in class next session . . . or write a commentary on it in your journal.

Additional Inquiries
from chapter 5

1. What is the one true path to God?
2. If God does not demand that we obey the Ten Commandments, what is their meaning?
3. Where is Heaven and how do we get there?
4. Why don't we experience Heaven here and now?
5. Following our earthly passions is a barrier to spiritual enlightenment. True or False?
6. What is the greatest source of man's unhappiness?
7. Why should we resist not evil or those things we don't want in our life?
8. What is the point of life?

CHAPTER 6

"SUFFERING SUCCOTASH!"

When I was a kid one of my favorite cartoon characters was a black and white cat with a bulbous nose named Sylvester who walked on two feet, talked with a lisp, and ran around exclaiming, *"Suffering succotash!"*

In the early days I never knew what the words meant, I only knew they sounded funny. Later I learned that *suffering succotash* meant nothing at all, since succotash can't suffer.

Still later, I learned that human beings are very much like succotash. No, it isn't because many of us are walking around like vegetables (although many of us are). It is because we don't have to suffer any more than vegetables do. Most of us only think we do.

Some people, in fact, actually believe that suffering is the way and the path to God. Of course, this is not true.

> I am not pleased by suffering, and whoever says I am does not know Me. Suffering is an unnecessary aspect of the human experience. It is not only unnecessary, it is unwise, uncomfortable, and hazardous to your health.
>
> *—Book 1, page 105*

No God in the universe who claims to be a loving, caring, wise, and righteous God would ever choose suffering for anyone or anything—much less demand it. The thought, then, that someone *must* suffer in order to meet the mandate of God is not only inaccurate, it is dangerous. Dangerous because if someone believed it, that someone might cause himself *or others* to suffer needlessly.

I have italicized the words "or others" in that sentence because this is where society gets itself into deep trouble. Many people hold a thought *for others* that they *insist must be true for those others*—such as the thought that suffering is necessary, no matter how great or how endless it is, and therefore we are not to terminate our lives, nor to assist others in terminating theirs, no matter much suffering is going on.

The idea that *God* wants this—nay, that God *demands it*—is what drives our society's continuing (but, thank goodness, lessening) opposition to physician-assisted suicide. And while I do not wish this companion to become a political science text, I do think bringing up such a point here is valid in that it dramatically illustrates how we as groups and individuals create, and live by, certain beliefs out of a distorted and inaccurate view of what is true.

So perhaps it is time now to fully understand and fully accept this truth:

Concept #20

Suffering is not necessary.

This may upset many apple carts (to say nothing about putting an end to many "dramas"), but it has to be said. It is another of the many important points in the book you are studying.

I am going to make a statement now that you may never have seen anywhere, may never have heard before in quite this way:

SUFFERING IS A POINT OF VIEW

I know this is difficult to believe—and even for those who believe, difficult to accept. Yet it is true. And *CwG* makes it clear this is true.

Exercise

Read pages 105 to 109 of *CwG* aloud (if you are in a study group, take turns reading a paragraph or two). Now complete the form below.

TIMES I HAVE SUFFERED

Make a list of five times you have suffered in your life.
(Include both physical and mental hurts.)

I SUFFERED THE TIME THAT . . .

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Now answer the following questions with regard to each of these moments:

Do you think you would suffer the same way if this occurred tomorrow instead of when it did?

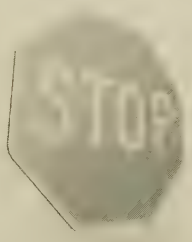
If yes, why do you think so?

If no, why not?

Why did you consider the above "suffering"?

What would you call it if it weren't "suffering"?

What does this tell you about suffering? About yourself?



To pause and reflect

Assignment

Between now and the next time your study group meets (or you return to your individual work with this companion), choose not to suffer.

Additional Inquiries
from chapter 6

1. Why doesn't God just make it possible for us to put an end to suffering?
2. What is the purpose of suffering?
3. What is our largest barrier to joy?
4. What is the best way to determine if the suggestions for happiness and fulfillment provided in *CwG* are the best ways to go about finding them?

CHAPTER 7

THE PATH OF THE HOUSEHOLDER

Walking the path of the Householder is not easy.

There is the story about the woman whose friend had just returned from visiting with a guru atop a mountain in some distant place. When the friend arrived home, she gushed about the guru for days. Finally, the woman said, "Tell me, how many children does this man have?"

"Children?" the friend could hardly believe her ears. "Why, he has no children. He's a guru. Very wise and very evolved."

"I see," the woman said. "Well, how long has he been married?"

"Married?" her friend gulped. "You don't understand. He's a *guru.* Gurus don't *get* married. That's way beneath him. He has no need for sex or romance or that kind of thing. He is very wise and very evolved,"

"Ummm," the woman nodded, understanding now. "When he gets married and has children, have him call me," she said. "Until then, he don't know nothin'."

There are not many people alive today who have not dreamt at least once of having nothing more to do than sit quietly all day and enter into silent conjecture on the Nature of Being. The guru on the mountaintop, the monk in his cell, the nun in seclusion in her

convent, all have been the subject of the envy of others from time to time. The contemplative life may not be for everyone, but it sure looks good to everyone every now and then.

It is not only the Contemplative, but also the Householder, who does well to dwell on Higher Things. Yet getting, and staying, in touch with grander notions and grander visions and grander understandings—and thus, your grander self—is not a thing done casually.

> This is a day-to-day, hour-to-hour, moment-to-moment act of supreme consciousness. It is a choosing and we are choosing every instant. It is ongoing creation . . . using the tools of creation we have discussed, and using them with awareness and sublime intention.
>
> *—Book 1, page 113*

Yet when one "plays the spiritual game" full out, one suddenly realizes that life's purpose is not what it was thought to be. It has nothing to do with what most of us have been spending the bulk of our time doing. It has nothing to do with putting a roof over our heads, clothes on our backs, and food in our mouths. And it certainly has nothing to do with doing this for others.

And yet—and here is the irony—when we live a truly spiritual life, we find ourselves doing exactly this! That is, we find ourselves putting roofs over our heads, clothes on our backs, and food in our mouths, virtually *without effort.* We also find ourselves *doing this for others—as a natural turn of events.*

This is because abundance and happiness follow as a natural consequence of spiritual wisdom and clarity. Put another way, once you know Who You Are, what you *have* multiplies magnificently. Sufficient, in fact, to give it away without missing any of it.

And in giving away what you yourself had once always wanted, you empower others to notice that they, too, live in a world of abundance and non-scarcity. Soon, they discover that they, too, can be (indeed, *have been*) the source of their own abundance and happiness—and that they no longer need you. That is your greatest moment. For you have done more than just *source* them, you have *empowered* them to be their *own* source.

Thus, giving power to others very soon creates your no longer *needing* to give power to others. Power begets power, just as love begets love, and life begets life, in all its wonderful forms.

This is "playing the spiritual game," and what the "spiritual game" calls upon you to do, *God* is *doing* all the time. And that is why *CwG* says that God's greatest moment is the moment you realize . . .

Concept #21

You need no God.

This is an astonishing statement—one of hundreds of astonishing statements in *CwG*—because it turns all of our previous understandings upside-down. All of our lives we have been told that we need God. Not only that we need God, but that God *needs* us to need Him, and if we even *say* that we don't (much less *act like it*), we displease God and incur His wrath.

So we have this dysfunctional God we have imagined Who demands that we need Him or else.

Exercise

Turn to page 114 in *CwG* and begin reading the italic type three sentences from the bottom. Read until the italic type ends on the top of page 115.

This is one of the most eloquent statements of eternal truth ever written. Discuss now with your study group—or in writing in your journal if you are studying alone—what these six extraordinary statements mean to you.

Answer the following questions:

1. Do you believe, in particular, Statements 5 and 6?
2. If you do, what does that imply in your life? What does that mean to you?

Further Discussion:
Did God create the problem? Is this a test?

Most people find it difficult to fit themselves into the scenario of empowerment laid out above. They do not see themselves providing life's necessities "virtually without effort." Just the opposite. They see themselves making a great deal of effort—and in many cases getting nowhere. They feel "stuck," trapped. And far from seeing themselves as not needing God, they turn to God to ask for help in getting out of the "traps" of their life. Some even believe that God created the problem! They see it as a "test" given them by God, and beg that the test be over, that the time of trial be ended.

Exercise

Now it's time to play "Traps I Am In." This is an exciting game that many people are playing without knowing it. It relates directly to the idea that, as a person walking the Path of the Householder, it is virtually impossible to lead a life that includes time to contemplate (much less experience) spiritual truth. Play the game below by filling in the squares. After all the squares are filled in, hold a roundtable discussion with your study group. (You may want to break into smaller groups to facilitate this process so that everyone has a chance to share.)

TRAPS I AM IN

In the spaces below, make a list of some "traps" in which you now find yourself.

Maybe you feel trapped in a job you don't like, or in a relationship that is not working, or in a behavior pattern that no longer serves you, or meeting some sort of obligation that it no longer pleases you to meet.

Whatever the case, describe the "trap" in the column on the left.

Then, supply the information requested in the other three columns.

A "Trap" I Am In	How I Got into This Trap	What Stops Me from Getting Out of It	What Would Happen If I Did Anyway

Does God deliberately create dramas and difficulties in our lives to see how well we've "learned our lessons"? Of course not. God does no such thing. A rereading of *CwG* (page 117) may be beneficial in helping to understand how God interacts with us. This passage states that God does not have any particular desires with regard to us, but rather, chooses for us what we choose for ourselves.

Here again the text of *CwG* is circular. We have visited this information before. Indeed, the chapter of *CwG* we are now studying ends with the recommendation that the material in this dialogue be read again and again "until you understand every passage. Until you're familiar with every word."

To pause and reflect

Assignment

This week, decide to spring free of your "traps." Choose at least one and do what it takes to get out of that. Report on how this went to your study group next week, or make a detailed entry on your experience in your journal.

Additional Inquiries
from chapter 7

1. What is the "process of self realization"?
2. How can we be truly helpful to those who are dependent on us for material and/or emotional support?
3. A true Master has many students. False masters have very few. True or False?
4. If we ask God to solve a problem and it remains unsolved, it is because:
    a. there's a lesson we need to learn
    b. we haven't earned the right to have it solved
    c. we don't understand how God interacts with us
    d. we didn't pray correctly
5. What is God's role in creating our lives?
6. Life proceeds out of our:
    a. highest thought
    b. intentions for it
    c. affirmations
    d. prayers
7. What is the best way to unlearn false teachings that keep us mired in guilt and self-recrimination?

CHAPTER 8

RELATING TO RELATIONSHIP

Human relationships have caused us more trouble than any other single aspect of the life experience. That is hardly surprising, since relationships form the basis of most of that experience. Still, having said that, one would think that with all this focus on relationships through the centuries of humankind's adventure we would have come to some solutions to the problems and the challenges they present, and to some greater wisdom on the matter.

It is clear we have not. At least, not most people.

Most people are still walking around as if in a daze on the issue of relationships. They don't know how to handle them, and they don't know how to get along without them. In short, they don't know how to *relate to relationships.*

We are not supposed to get along without relationships, of course. Indeed, without relationships we are nothing. We cannot be Who We Really Are.

That is because in this, the Realm of the Relative, we can only experience ourselves *in relation to something or someone else.* (See Concept 5 in this companion.) In the Realm of the Absolute, whence we have come, this is not true. In that realm we and God (who are One and the Same) know Ourselves completely Right Now (which is the only "time"

there is). But if we want to *experience* ourselves as that which we know ourselves to Be, we must move into the Realm of the Relative.

Exercise

Reread the text that appears on pages 22–28 of *CwG.* Do not skip this short review. It will be very valuable for you to reread this material right now. Then answer the following questions in your journal, or in your study group.

1. What is the reason your soul left the Realm of the Absolute and now lives inside your body in this physical world?
2. Why does God not simply experience Himself as Who He Is in the Realm of the Absolute?
3. Why has God given each of us the power to create our own reality?

If you do not know the answers to these questions, study *CwG,* pages 22–28 again. A thorough understanding of these concepts will greatly facilitate your integration of the material on relationships in the chapter you are now studying.

Every relationship is a blessed gift—even those relationships that you believe to have brought you nothing but sadness and pain. When you deeply comprehend this you will understand that . . .

Concept #22

All relationships are holy.

Yet this understanding does not always help us make our relationships work. Especially our romantic relationships. And when our romantic relationships fail, it is nearly always for the same reason: we got into them for the wrong reason.

> Most people enter relationships with an eye toward what they can get out of them, rather than what they can put into them. The purpose

> of relationship is to decide what part of yourself you'd like to see "show up," not what part of another you can capture and hold.
>
> *—Book 1, page 122*

There is only one purpose for relationship—and for all of life—and that is to be and to declare, to become and to fulfill, to express and to experience Who You Really Are. *Every* relationship, with every person, place, or thing, allows you to do that.

Exercise

Most people have an image of themselves, an idea of Who They Are. On the scale below, fill in the box to indicate Who You Are with regard to the amount or quantity you possess of the human qualities listed. (On the yardstick, 1 is the least and 10 is the most of each quality you see yourself being.)

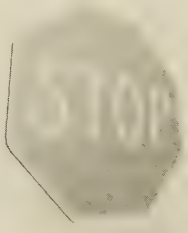
I AM . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Honest						☐				
Loyal						☐				
Courageous						☐				
Beautiful / Handsome						☐				
Intelligent						☐				
Considerate						☐				
Sexually Sensational						☐				
Spiritually Evolved						☐				
Open and Transparent						☐				
Helpful						☐				
Insightful						☐				
Compassionate						☐				
Generous						☐				
An Exciting Person						☐				
Capable, Resourceful						☐				

Further Discussion:
The paradox of all human relationships

This may be very difficult for you to believe, but you have no need for any particular Other in your life in order for you to fully experience Who You Are. And yet without *some* Other you are nothing.

For a fuller understanding of this, review chapter 8 of *CwG* through page 127.

Then . . .



To pause and reflect

Assignment

Find time this next week to listen to the radio twice for at least one-half hour each time. Pick a station playing popular or country music. As you listen, make a log of the songs you hear. Rate each song according to the chart on the next page.

How many songs said that the singer "can't live without" that certain other?

_____

What does this tell you about the messages we are receiving from today's music?

_____

_____

_____

_____

NAME OF SONG	Song Is Sad	Song Is Happy	Song Is about "One Special Other"	Song Is about How All Others Are Special

How many movies have you seen that send the message summarized in the column at the far right on this page? Give their titles.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What does this tell you about the kinds of relationships our films model for us?

_____

_____

_____

_____

CHAPTER 8, SECTION 2
THE VIRTUE OF BEING SELF-CENTERED

If you have reread chapter 8 through page 127 as requested, you have already refreshed your memory on an extraordinary principle of making relationships work: self-centeredness.

It is highly beneficial in all human relationships to put yourself first.

> Let each person in relationship worry not about the other, but only, only, only about Self . . . the most loving person is the person who is Self-centered.
>
> *—Book 1, page 124*

As *CwG* points out, this may seem a strange teaching. It violates every sense most of us have had about how relationships are supposed to function. Yet *CwG* clears up the mystery by explaining that at every moment everybody is trying to accomplish something; everybody is "up to" something every minute of every day. No action—not a single thing we do from morning 'til night—is without motivation, purpose, and reason. True, sometimes we don't *know* the reason we are doing things. Sometimes we haven't thought it all out. But at some level, your mind has already made itself up about why your body is doing "this" rather than "that," and it has instructed your body to do it.

So everything you are doing, including reading this book right now, you are doing for a *reason.* There is something you are trying to get out of it. Something you are seeking to experience. Something you hope to accomplish.

When you are clear as to what you hope to accomplish with every action you take in life, your actions themselves reflect that clarity. You become a person who is highly focused and always "on purpose."

If you are not clear on what you are hoping to accomplish, the Principle of Self-Centeredness will make no sense to you. Or if you *are* clear, but what you have decided to accomplish is *off purpose* (that is, it has nothing to do with the reason you are on this Earth, in your body, right here, right now), you will be equally mystified about the wisdom of the Principle of Self-Centeredness.

Concept #23

Your purpose in life is to decide and to declare, to express and to experience Who You Really Are. This is the purpose of ALL *of life.*

We will keep pounding away at this until it is indelibly embedded. The CwG dialogue says this over and over again, in different ways. I am particularly inspired by the statement that our life purpose is to live "the grandest version of the greatest vision" we ever had about ourselves.

The grandest version of the greatest vision. That has a ring to it which for me makes everything clear. It is a standard against which I can measure everything I think, say, and do. Is this thing I am now thinking, this thing I am now saying, this thing I am now doing a reflection of the grandest version of the greatest vision I've ever had about myself?

Of course, before any of us could answer such a question, we would have to decide what that greatest vision is. You are going to do that now. There are many exercises in this companion, but of all of those I have created, I believe this to be the most important. Please take your time with this. If you are in a study group, you may wish to devote the rest of this meeting to this exercise.

Exercise

Create now the "grandest version of the greatest vision" you've ever had about yourself. Use the forms below to help you.

Here is a description of the greatest vision I have about myself with regard to . . .
. . . MONEY

Here is a description of the greatest vision I have about myself with regard to . . .
. . . LOVE

Here is a description of the greatest vision I have about myself with regard to . . .
. . . SEX

Here is a description of the greatest vision I have about myself with regard to . . .
. . . GOD

Here is a description of the greatest vision I have about myself with regard to . . .
. . . PATIENCE

Here is a description of the greatest vision I have about myself with regard to . . .
. . . COMPASSION

Here is a description of the greatest vision I have about myself with regard to . . .
. . . SHARING

Here is a description of the greatest vision I have about myself with regard to . . .
. . . LOVING ANOTHER

Further Discussion:
The radical teaching that is not so radical

Now perhaps it will be more clear to you that the Principle of Self-Centeredness is not so radical a teaching after all. If you still don't "get it," let me give you a very direct illustration. Suppose a person decides to devote his whole life to God and to goodness. That becomes his mission and his purpose. It becomes his highest ideal to reflect and to demonstrate goodness and Godliness. Not in order to be "good" to others, but simply (and profoundly) to bring himself the richest experience of himself he can imagine.

Now if this man has really made this decision wholeheartedly, and if he serves his purpose with every thought, word, and deed, do you think he will do any good in the world? Do you think he will touch other people's lives in a positive way? Of course he will—and he will not have done it by serving the purposes of others.

Similarly, if a woman decides that Who She Is right now is the Best Mother Ever There Was, and if she makes that decision about herself joyously and wholeheartedly, and if she is very centered in herself with regard to this, do you think that by serving her agenda, and her agenda *only,* she will bring goodness and happiness to others?

Of course she will.

You see, when your idea about yourself is *very high,* and when you do nothing all day long but *serve* that idea, you cannot *help* but be a blessing to others. In fact, we are the *highest* blessing to others when we serve the highest calling within ourselves.

Now in the exercise above you were given an invitation to begin drawing a definition of Who You Are. You may wish to expand this exercise to include other words not on the beginning list we've provided.

Who *are* you? What is the greatest vision you have about yourself with regard to, say, war? Food stamps and public assistance to the poor? The death penalty? Abortion? Homosexuality? Gun control?

The list could go on and on—and if you are really interested in drawing a detailed portrait of yourself, it will. You will not be satisfied with just skimming the surface. You will create a list that looks at both your inner and your outer life and defines Who You Are to the *nth* degree.

Then, if you are *truly* serious about this definition, you will go out and walk your talk. You will seek to *live* this "grandest version" of Who You Are. And you will be so

joyously busy, so happily engaged in this process, that you will scarcely have time to worry about what some other person in relationship with you is up to.

You will come to know, as the Master knows, that it doesn't *matter* what your special other (or *any* other) is being, doing, having, saying, wanting, demanding. It doesn't *matter* what the other is thinking, expecting, planning. It only matters what *you* are being in *relationship* to that.

> It is not in the action of another, but in your re-action, that your salvation will be found.
>
> *—Book 1, page 127*

To pause and reflect

Experiment

This week practice being self-centered. See what it feels like to do nothing that you do not want to do, given your decision about yourself regarding Who You Really Are.

While you are conducting this experiment in staying on purpose, enter into another experiment as well. Using the portrait, or definition, of yourself you have drawn here, see how many times during the upcoming week you have used your thoughts, words, and deeds to reflect that definition and to project that picture of yourself out to the world and how many times you have not.

Carry a small spiral notebook with you and do a Morning, Noon, and Night check, making entries three times a day and tabulating the number of thoughts, words, and deeds that fall into each category. That is, either they fall into Category 1 (representations of your highest idea about yourself) or Category 2 (reenactments of lesser ideas about Who You Really Are).

Have fun with this. Look at it all with a smile. See the game. Enjoy the process. Don't "beat yourself up" about it if you have more Category 2's than 1's. Just look at it and see what there is to see and, if you feel it would serve you, choose differently next time.

Put your tabulations into your journal. Come to your next study group prepared to talk about what your experiments have proven.

CHAPTER 8, SECTION 3
DOING WHAT IS BEST FOR YOU

Throughout chapter 8 of *CwG* the point is made over and over that you must always do what is best for you in a relationship. Always.

In section 2 of this chapter of the *Companion* it was made clear that self-centered action is by no means an action that by definition disserves another. Quite to the contrary, depending upon our idea about ourselves and our decision about how we are seeking to manifest that idea in physical form, our self-centered action may indeed produce wonderful benefit for another. Not just in thought, not just in word, but in *deed*.

The point: when you are clear what is best for you, and only *do* what is best for *you*, you never perform an unGodly act.

> If, therefore, you have caught yourself in an unGodly act as a result of doing what is best for you, the confusion is not in having put yourself first, but rather in misunderstanding what is best for you.
>
> —*Book 1, page 132*

Many people refuse to do what is best for them in relationships. They've been taught that truly loving relationships require that we do what is best for our beloved Other, whether that is what is best for them or not. More often than not this leads to resentment. And sooner or later resentment ends relationships—or at the very least turns them sour. Therefore, it would be wise to contemplate . . .

Concept #24

Relationships work best when you always do what is best for you.

If you keep yourself single of purpose, if you remain focused on the main chance, if you refuse to deviate from your process of re-creating yourself anew in every moment of Now in the next grandest version of the greatest vision ever you had about Who You Are, you will never disserve another by serving yourself.

Exercise

Keeping in mind Who and What you have decided You Are (as described in detail through the exercise in section 2 of this chapter), let's see now how these ideas about yourself could play themselves out in everyday life. Below is a series of "life situations." Complete this exercise as if it were a game. Fill in the form and indicate what you would choose to do under the following circumstances . . .

YOU ARE TOLD by your friend Bob that he is having an affair. His wife Joanne, who is also your very good friend, later asks you about it, saying that she suspects her husband is involved with someone else, but that every time she asks him about it directly, he tells her she's hallucinating and projecting all her insecurities onto him. Joanne now is wondering whether she's crazy or what . . . she asks you for advice on how to calm her irrational fears. You listen to her beg you for guidance, and then you . . .

YOU ARE AWAKENED in the middle of the night by the sound of someone in the house. Investigating, you find a man leaving by the back door, dragging your teenage daughter through the kitchen with him. You yell for him to let your daughter go, but he does not. Your eyes light upon a cabinet drawer where you keep a gun. Lunging, you grab it, pointing it at the man and once more demanding that he release your daughter. He does not. You move toward the man and, still pointing the gun, step between him and the door. He growls, "It's her or me, bud," and threatens to strangle her if you don't let them pass. Suddenly you see an opening and you realize that with one quick trigger pull you could inflict a wound that will stop him—but will also no doubt kill him. It is clear to you in your split-second analysis that this will be your only chance. The next thing you do is . . .

YOU FIND $300 in a paper bag on a park bench. No one is nearby, and you can't see anyone who has just walked away. There is nothing else in the bag except the cash. You count the money a second time and realize that two bills had been stuck together. The newly discovered bill is a thousand-dollar note. There is $1,300, not $300, in the bag. Again you look around and you see no one in the entire area. Then you . . .

YOU HAVE JUST moved into a new rental home and the second day there a plain brown envelope arrives for the man who lived there before you. The property manager who rented you the house has told you that the former tenant has left the country, giving no forwarding address. You notice that there is no return address on the envelope, and just then it drops out of your hand, tearing and spilling all over the floor a series of artistic photographs of beautiful people in explicitly sexual situations. You gather the pictures up and you . . .

YOU ARE ASKED by your spouse to turn down a job you have wanted for a long time and just been offered. Your spouse makes this request because taking the job would require you and the family to move to another city, which would mean your spouse would have to leave a job that does not pay nearly as well, but that your spouse does like. You talk it over and it is clear that your spouse is not going to have a change of mind, nor see things your way and give you the green light to take the job you love and have been applying for every year for five years. Your spouse asks you to consider someone else's happiness and job satisfaction other than your own. After thinking everything over, you . . .

YOU ARE ON THE WAY home from the office Christmas party, at which you have been given a cash bonus of $500 by your boss. It is the first really "unassigned" money you have had in months, and just in time to make it possible for you to get that wonderful gift for your spouse that you were going to get if you could only find $500 free and clear. Just as you approach your car in the parking lot, an unkempt woman shuffles up to you and asks you, please, for some money. She explains that her kids are in a car around the corner, that she and the children have been sleeping in the car for three days because they have not been able to pay the $325 due on their low-rent apartment. They can get back into the apartment for the holidays, the landlord told them, if they can come up with the rent by noon tomorrow. You reach into your pocket and you feel the five one hundred dollar bills. Then you . . .

YOU ARE IN A grocery story and you see a man slip a small package of cheese into his pocket and start out of the store. Glancing around, you see that no one but you has noticed. You then . . .

YOU ARE going into the voting booth to decide on a referendum that includes two questions on which you haven't yet made up your mind. Question A is a measure to return the death penalty to your state for crimes involving the death of another, and Question B is a measure that would bar homosexuals from filing claims of housing or job discrimination because of their sexual orientation. After reading the measures one more time in the booth, you come to your decisions about both, and you . . .

In the above "make believe" situations, did you always do what was best for you? How did you determine which course of action was "best"? You are now invited to discuss this exercise and your answers to the questions above with your group. If you are working alone, write a commentary in your journal.

Further Discussion:
Looking at the obligations of relationship

Below is a list of the obligations you have in any significant relationship. Please read the list carefully.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Do you notice anything unusual about the list above? You are right. *Nothing* is *listed.* That's because in your relationships you have no obligations. Nor are there any restrictions, limitations, guidelines, or rules. Others will try to convince you that there are, for sure. They'll even be glad to *create* some obligations, restrictions, and rules for you if you will let them. But in the eyes of God, you have none.

If this is difficult for you to accept, please read pages 135–138 in *CwG* again.

And again.

Then . . .

To pause and reflect

Assignment

This week move through all your relationships, business and personal, with clarity that you have no obligations in any of them. Do nothing that you feel you "have to do," and only do what you feel you choose to do, out of your decision about Who Your Are and what you choose to be, do, and have in your life.

Make a note each night about what, if anything, you did not do that you would have done before. Also make a note about all the things you continued doing exactly as you'd always done them, and explain in writing why you chose to do these things this week even though you told yourself that you didn't "have to."

Come prepared to discuss this with your study group next week.

CHAPTER 8, SECTION 4
THE BEST WEDDING VOWS EVER

I began this chapter by declaring that human relationships have caused us more trouble than any other single aspect of the life experience. I should add now, as I end it, that they've also caused us the most joy.

Yet there are no guarantees of that. Nor of anything in life. As *CwG* says, "If you want guarantees in life, then you don't want *life.* You want rehearsals for a script that's already been written."

How, then, to help ourselves get through the relationship maze with minimum trouble and maximum joy? Enter relationship with another for the *right reason.* Use your relationship for growth. Understand that it was meant for that.

Do not be deluded into thinking it is going to contain nothing but bliss (as you define it). It *will* contain nothing but bliss, which you will realize as your soul matures and you change your definition of what bliss is. For now, be willing to use it for growth; be willing to grow.

> Know and understand that there will be challenges and difficult times, Don't try to avoid them. Welcome them. Gratefully. See them as

> grand gifts from God; glorious opportunities to do what you came into the relationship—and life—to do.
>
> *—Book 1, page 141*

And what are you seeking to grow *into?* Why, your highest *self,* of course. Remember, your purpose in life is to be Who You Really Are. You have used the exercises and the assignments in this companion to once again become clear about that and to create an even higher version of that. You have been given the chance to announce and to declare the *grandest* version of the *greatest* vision you ever had about Who You Are.

Having made this decision, having *re-created* yourself in this new and grander image, it is now only left for you to understand why it is important for you to do that. Which leads us to . . .

Concept #25

You are a messenger.

Every day, every moment you send a message to the Universe, to God, and to all those whose lives you touch: *This is Who I Am.*

You do it with every thought you think, every word you speak, every deed you do.

Yet not only is your message This is Who I Am. It is also *This is who you can be.* With each moment of your life you are setting an example, clearing a path, showing the way.

"I am the Life and the Way," you are saying. "Follow me."

Now most of you do not think you are saying that. In fact, most of you would never *dream* of saying that. Most of you do not want that kind of responsibility, nor do you see life as having assigned such responsibility to you.

But life has.

You have come here as a savior. You have not come here to *be* saved, but to save others. That is why it is important to work on yourself, to heal every false thought you have about yourself. (It is, no doubt, why you have been led to this companion and to the extraordinary text of *CwG* that brought you to it.) When your self-healing is over (and this can happen in an instant; it need not take forever), there will be nothing more you

have to be, nothing more you have to do, nothing more you have to have in order to accept this assignment.

There will be no more workshops you have to attend, no more sermons you have to hear, no more growth groups to which you have to go. There will be no more books you have to read, no more tapes you have to listen to, no more companions like *this* you have to work through.

You may still choose to do some of these things for the sheer fun of it, for the pure enjoyment, but there will be *no more "improvements" you have to make to yourself.*

In truth, there never *were.* But you did not know that. You did not believe it. You believed instead an idea about yourself, given to you by the world, which said less about you than the truth about you.

Your false thoughts about yourself then led to actions that told a lie about you and did not show to others Who You Really Are. The Real You was not represented. That is, it was not *re-presented.* Rather than the God-in-You being presented again to all the world, you were misrepresented. And so you have spent your time trying to make yourself "better" somehow, trying to learn all that you felt you had to learn.

You have had to learn *nothing.* You have had only to remember.

When you remember—that is, re-member . . . that is, become a member once again of the Body of God—you will see clearly that there is nothing you've ever had to learn.

You were not sent here to take care of "you." You were not sent here to somehow solve your problems. You were given these problems as *gifts,* as divine opportunities to choose and to declare, to express and to experience, to know and to declare Who You Really Are, so that in the knowing you could show others who do *not* know.

That is your assignment. And you have given it to yourself.

And that is the great secret.

Are you ready to hear this secret? This is the secret that will change the world. This is the secret of why you have come here, of what you are doing in your body; of what the whole experience is all about.

Your job is to save others from every false thought they have about themselves, to show them who they really are by showing them who *you* really are. For they will not believe in themselves, and can only believe what they see in another. What they see in you, they may at last believe they can find in themselves. And so, by your life you re-mind people (that is to say, you cause them to be of a new *mind*) about Who They Really Are. This is the message you carry to them through your life lived. And that is what is meant by Concept 25.

CwG calls us *all* to be messengers. We are anyway, whether we want to be or not. As earlier noted, everything we think, say, and do *sends a message to someone* about Who We Are. That message reaffirms to others Who They Are.

That's how it works here. We cannot be more collectively than we all are individually. And who are we individually? We don't know. We have forgotten. That's why we keep wandering around, as one who thirsts in the desert, reaching out to others, hoping they will affirm to us who we *think* we are, hoping they will *reflect* to us our highest notion of ourselves. When they do, we love them, for we've had our greatest thoughts about ourselves confirmed at last.

You see, we are trying everything we know (and *everyone* we know) to *find ourselves.* This is not the recommended way to become Who You Really Are, but it is the way most are choosing.

And so we go around mirroring each other. We mirror each other and reaffirm each other in either our lowest thoughts about ourselves or in our highest, in our smallest vision or in our grandest.

Others know intuitively when they look at us that what they are seeing is a *mirror image of themselves.* Indeed, when others "like" us, it is because they see the best parts of themselves in us. When they "don't like" us, it is the "disliked" (and often the disowned) part of *themselves* from which they turn.

And so, we are creating together, most of us unconsciously. And our collective consciousness becomes our collective reality.

This is a powerful truth. Yet very few people understand this. And so, very few people understand their role—*the role they are playing right now*—in creating the world as we know it.

Are you, by your life, healing, saving? For that matter, have you ever decided *why* you've come here? Try this on for size. It is a paraphrase from *A Course in Miracles.*

You have come to the room to heal the room.
You have come to the space to heal the space.
There is no other reason for you to be here.

Does this sound "other"-centered to you, rather than "self"-centered? Then you have not yet moved to the grandest version of yourself and the grandest purpose *for* yourself. When it is your purpose to be that which heals, then you are doing this for *you,*

as an expression of Who You Really Are, not for another. The exterior result (healing of others) is the same. The interior reason is different. You have altered your *raison d'etre*—your *reason for being.*

Exercise

This is a process called Last Time/Next Time. In it, you are invited to look to see what you have been doing to "heal the space" through your life these days—and what you choose to do in the future. Take a moment in your study group to fill out the form below, then discuss (in smaller circles if your main group is too large) what the process brought up for you. If you are working in this companion alone, reflect on this exercise in your journal.

LAST TIME / NEXT TIME

The last time someone cut me off on the highway without warning I . . .

The next time someone cuts me off on the highway without warning I will . . .

The last time I had a major disagreement with my spouse I . . .

The next time I have a major disagreement with my spouse I will . . .

The last time I was wrongly accused of something in public I . . .

The next time I am wrongly accused of something in public I will . . .

The last time I found I had been cheated by a friend I . . .

The next time I find I have been cheated by a friend I will . . .

The last time I learned my reservations had been given to someone else I . .

The next time I learn my reservations have been given to someone else I will . . .

The last time I had a long talk with my parents I . . .

The next time I have a long talk with my parents I will . . .

The last time I entered a relationship I . . .

The next time, if I ever enter a relationship again, I will . . .

The last time I suddenly found my relationship ended I . . .

The next time, if I suddenly find my relationship ended, I will . . .

Further Discussion:
A new pledge of troth; a new kind of promise

We've concluded our game of *Last Time/Next Time* with a look at beginnings and endings of relationships because relationships are the most important aspects of our lives. It is through our relationship with God, our relationship with each other, and our relationship with every person, place, or thing on this planet that we are defined.

It has been said now several times that the difficulty in most romantic relationships is that most of us have been entering into them for the wrong reason. To end loneliness, stop depression, bring ourselves love, maybe even improve our sex lives. In other words, we move into relationships to fill our needs and desires. We see a person across the room and we think, "Hmm, that person looks pretty good from over here," meaning that it appears as if that individual has the "stuff we want" and feel we need in order to be happy.

Now if that other person *does* turn out to have the "right stuff," we get closer. We may even marry that person. In any event, we enter into a relationship based on *need fulfillment.* The other person, of course, is doing the same thing. And so we enter into an agreement. It is not unlike a compact between two nations. We have a trade agreement. I'll give you this if you'll give me that.

Yet on Valentine's Day we don't send a card that says, "I trade you very much." That is because we have decided to call this arrangement Love.

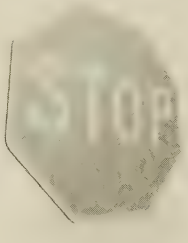
CwG sheds a lot of light on all of this. It also recommends that we never enter into a really meaningful relationship again unless we and our mate agree on purpose. Finally, it lists in one extraordinary paragraph what the purpose of relationship could be if we chose that.

This paragraph has come to mean a great deal to a great many people. Some have even written to me asking if they could use this paragraph as their wedding vow.

When I began creating this companion, I knew that I wanted to end its chapter on relationships with this paragraph, from page 141 of *CwG,* rewritten as a partnership commitment statement.

> To my beloved, with whom I now choose to be a partner in life: I agree at a conscious level that the purpose of my relationship with you is and will always be to create an opportunity, not an obligation—an

opportunity for growth, for full self-expression, for lifting our lives to their highest potential, for healing every false thought or small idea we've ever had about ourselves, and for ultimate reunion with God through the communion of our two souls.



To pause and reflect

Assignment

This week, take stock. What is the most important relationship of your life? How have you been acting in that relationship? Have your actions spoken the highest idea you have about yourself? If there were some way you could speak an even higher idea, what would that look like? When would you choose to start?

Give yourself a week to think about this. Next week, in your journal, discuss these things. Come prepared to discuss them in your study group as well.

Additional Inquiries
from chapter 8

1. What is the true function of relationships?
2. How does the typical couple's concerns in a relationship differ from the concerns God says would be for both parties' highest good?
3. Finding someone who loves you helps you to finally see, and love, yourself. True or False?

4. In truly loving relationship we put others first. True or False?

5. Our first and most important relationship should always be with:

    a. God

    b. our wisest teacher

    c. ourself

    d. the one who loves us most

6. When we reach Mastery, we will react to attacks with love. Until then, what is the most appropriate way for us to react to hurts and attacks from others?

7. The highest thing we can do with our negative feelings is to have them. True or False?

8. A person who believes that life is about gains and losses believes she is a _____

9. A person who believes life is about loving or failing to love believes he is a _____

10. What is the Highest Choice when deciding who we are?

11. The best criterion for making the Highest Choice in any situation is:

    a. that which produces the highest good for you

    b. that which reflects God's wishes

    c. that which produces the highest good for another

    d. that which does the most good for all concerned

12. What is the first step in determining what is best for you in any situation?

13. Is war ever justified?

14. Can there be any spiritual purpose in declaring some things as evil?

15. What are the sacred obligations of marriage and life partnership?

16. We are born in sin and must be saved. True or False?

17. The length of a relationship is a measure of how successful it is. True or False?

18. If you and your partner would like to cultivate a long-term relationship, what would be the best vow to make?

CHAPTER 9

YOU ARE THE TRUTH

Chapter 9 of *CwG* does not center on a particular topic, but rather, revisits some points made earlier and introduces a few new ideas for our consideration. The most important point made in this chapter is summarized in dramatic fashion in the chapter title above. *You are the truth.*

What *CwG* is saying here, what God would like us to notice, is that in many areas of our lives we have given our power away. We have done this by making someone else's truth our own. This is so insidious that most of the time most of us don't even know it has happened. Yet the fact that we have done this is reflected in many of our most important choices and decisions.

> And what, pray tell, forms the basis of your decision? Your own experience? No. In most cases you've chosen to accept someone else's decision. Someone who came before you and, presumably, knows better. . . . This is especially true on important matters. In fact, the more important the matter, the less likely you are to listen to your

> own experience, and the more ready you seem to be to make someone else's ideas your own.
>
> —*Book 1, page 152*

As the book points out, many people have given up virtually total control over certain areas of their life because of this. Other people's opinions are more important than their own. Other people's wisdom is greater than their own. Other people's sources are more authoritative than their own. And other people's truths are "more truthful" than their own. Yet this is the lie that others would have us believe. Many of the institutions in society need us to believe this lie, or they cannot get us to do what they need us to do to continue existing.

Exercise

Using an important topic (in this case, is killing "right" or "wrong"?), let's see how the state, how religions, and how all of society needs us to believe their truth in order to survive. Turn to page 153 in *CwG* and read aloud the material found there. When you have finished, please answer the three questions on the bottom of that page.

If you have successfully completed the exercise above, you have come to an inner awareness and have produced an outer experience of a great wisdom:

Concept #26

You are the truth.

This is a very powerful statement. Because it is so powerful, it is to some very scary. Yet this statement in many ways summarizes the entire message of *CwG*—and if it is "scary," then *so must the whole book be.*

The statement YOU ARE THE TRUTH means there is no other truth that matters but your own. There is no absolute right and wrong. What is "right" is what you *say* is right. What is "wrong" is what you *say* is wrong. And by your decisions you paint a portrait of Who You Are. Indeed, by their decisions, states and nations have already painted such portraits. So, too, have religions. So, too, has society.

Further Discussion:
Life's biggest challenge; life's exciting adventure

The biggest challenge you will ever face in your life—the grandest adventure you will ever take—will be the Definition of Your Self through the painting of this portrait.

What is important to remember about this portrait is that it can always change. What you put on the canvas today does not have to remain on the canvas tomorrow. You can paint over the image and create a new painting.

Would you like to create such a new painting right now? Good! Let's begin. Remember, just as your painting does not have to remain the same, so, too, does it not have to change. Certain elements, certain colors chosen carefully from your palette, may remain exactly as they were, while in other areas of your portrait you may choose to alter some of the shades and hues.

Let's create an updated picture of Who You Are through the announcement of your latest decisions about what *you call* right and wrong.

Exercise

Below is a list of subjects. Next to each entry, simply make a check mark indicating whether you think it is right or wrong, or okay or not okay. Remember, as you move through the list that YOU ARE THE TRUTH. Do not go to your memory bank to retrieve what someone else has told you about all of this. Just go inside and see what is true for you, right here, right now in your reality.

(Note: This is similar to an earlier exercise in which I asked you to say what you imagined God would think about various aspects of life. This time I am asking you what *you* think.)

(Further Note: I understand that you know there is no such thing as "right" and "wrong" in Ultimate Reality. What I am seeking to produce here is the experience of you creating what is "right" and wrong" in YOUR reality, in order to thus define yourself as Who You Are.)

THE GAME OF "RIGHT" AND "WRONG"

THE ITEM	I call this "Right" or "Okay"	I call this "Wrong" or "Not Okay"
Prostitution		
Mixed marriage		
Gay marriage		
White lies that save face		
White lies that save another's face		
Using killing force to stop a killing		
Using killing force to make another accept your religion		
Walking away from your spouse in the middle of an argument		
Gun control		
Abortion on demand		
Abortion to protect a mother's life or health		
Corporate "welfare" (tax breaks to firms doing business a certain way)		
Individual welfare		
Premarital sexual encounters		
Intramarital sexual encounters		
Extramarital sexual encounters		
Extramarital sexual encounters with permission of spouse (in other words, open marriage)		
Corporal punishment		
Medicinal use of marijuana		
Recreational use of marijuana		
Medicinal use of alcohol		
Recreational use of alcohol		
The death penalty		
Breaking the speed limit		
Physician-assisted suicide		
Loved one-assisted suicide		
Suicide		
Public assistance for legal aliens		
Public assistance for illegal aliens		
Ebonics		
Cutting down old growth forests		
One world government		
Oral sex		
Setting prices at five times your cost		

THE ITEM	I call this "Right" or "Okay"	I call this "Wrong" or "Not Okay"
Setting prices at three times your cost		
Setting prices at a hundred times your cost		
Getting the highest price you can get, irrespective of your cost		
Burning the American flag		
Gays in the military		
Finagling on your taxes		
Hazing rituals that cause physical pain		
Cloning animals to produce better stock		
Cloning humans to eliminate imperfections		
Using fetal cells from aborted embryos to halt or reverse Alzheimer's Disease		
Forcing all-male schools to accept females		
Boys and girls on high school wrestling teams		
Government-subsidized health care		
The "V" chip for parental TV control		
Sex education in schools		
Condom availability in schools		
Sexually explicit photographs, movies		
VERY sexually explicit photos, movies		
Using profanity		
Using obscenities		
Living together outside of marriage		
Having children outside of marriage		
Refusing to rent to someone because of race		
Refusing to rent because of family size		
Refusing to rent for any reason, because it is your property and you should be able to do with it as you please		
Firing someone because of that person's sexual preference		
Refusing to hire someone because of that person's sexual preference		
Hiring, or refusing to hire, anyone you please because it is your business and you should be able to do as you wish		
Environmental protections that stop economic development		
Genetic engineering to eliminate disease		
Denying insurance on the basis of one's genetic predispositions		
Violent episodes on television		
Sexual episodes on television		

Further Discussion:
The only game in town

Now you may well ask yourself, why bother with all this? Why even start off on such a path of self-declaration and self-definition? What is to be gained by embarking on such a journey? Where is the incentive? What is the reason?

The answer is ridiculously simple.

There is nothing else to do.

As *CwG* carefully explains, this is the only game in town. In fact, you are playing this game right now—and always—whether you know it or not. Everything you think, say, and do is an act of self-definition.

Most of your life you have been defining yourself unconsciously. Sometimes you have done so by unconsciously allowing yourself to imagine that you are what others have called you, that you are how others have imagined you. This is unconscious self-creation, as discussed on pages 127–129 of this companion. It is also self-creation without conscious decisions having been made beforehand as to Who and What You Choose to Be.

The book *Conversations with God,* and this companion as well, issue an invitation for you to move to the next level, to step into *conscious* creation.

To pause and reflect

Experiment

This next week, see if you can avoid any "automatic" reactions that tend to create you as who you *were* rather than who you now choose to be.

Every time you see yourself falling into an old pattern or moving into an old reaction to something, take just a second to stop and think: *Is this Who I Now Am?* If the answer comes up "yes," go ahead and be it. If the answer comes up "no," look to see who you *really are,* and then project that.

NOTE: If you fall into old patterns, don't "beat yourself up" about it. Just notice it and see whether it serves you to do that. If it doesn't serve you, decide not to fall into those patterns anymore. Intend something else for yourself.

Remember, your life proceeds out of your intentions for it. Also remember, you are the truth.

Come to next week's group ready to discuss how the "truth that you are" feels to you. Does it feel good? Do you now choose a new truth? How has your work with *CwG,* chapter 9, affected your life?

ADDITIONAL INQUIRIES
from chapter 9

1. You don't have to do anything. True or False?
2. Do we have an obligation to stop aggression?
3. What criterion is best to use in deciding whether killing another—or any other action—is justified?
4. Under what circumstances do you believe killing is justified?
5. When we don't have an answer in a moral dilemma, it is appropriate to rely on a religious or spiritual authority. True or False?
6. Why struggle on a spiritual path to enlightenment if such a path is so arduous?
7. What is the inherent purpose of life?
8. It is arrogant to tell the Universe your truth. True or False?

CHAPTER 10

REAL LOVE KNOWS NO CONDITIONS

Of all the chapters in *CwG,* this is the one about which I receive the most mail. It seems to be many people's favorite.

I'm not surprised, really, because the directness and simplicity of its message is the Truth we have hoped to hear all of our lives. We love God, and God loves us. What could be more natural? What could be more perfect? What could be more comforting?

The implication of this message has even more impact than the message itself. For by its simplicity we receive the implication that God's love for us is unconditional. If there were conditions attached, God would have said so. He did not. Yet this kind of love is difficult for many people to believe in. Even coming from God. Perhaps *especially* coming from God.

> You do not remember the experience of the love of God. And so you try to imagine what God's love must be like, based on what you see of love in the world.
>
> *—Book 1, page 17*

Yet God's love is not like the love we find in the world. Indeed, God's love is literally *out of this world.*

Concept #27

God's love is unconditional.

Moving into Godliness means moving into unconditionality. The first step in that direction is making an accurate assessment of where you are today.

Exercise

Make a list below of the people for whom you have demonstrated unconditional love. (You love them no matter what they do; you have no expectations.)

Now make a list of the people who have demonstrated unconditional love for *you.*

To pause and reflect

Assignment

Make a list of the people to whom you choose to consciously show unconditional love this week. Include on the list at least three people to whom you can never remember demonstrating unconditional love and acceptance before. (The idea is to expand your circle!)

Answer these questions:

What would it take to show them this kind of love now?
What do you believe has stopped you before?
Does it seem as though it might be any easier this time?
If so, why? If not, why not?

Come prepared to discuss this with your study group next week. If you are working alone in this companion, write a commentary at the end of this week in your journal. Be sure to answer the above questions.

CHAPTER 11

THE MONEY GAME

Few energies within the life experience affect us quite like money. Most people are very private about money—even more private than they are about their sex lives. Ask people how many lovers they have had and many will tell you. (If they have had many, it could be a source of pride. If they have had very few, it could be a source of pride. Either way, they win!) Ask people how many dollars they have or earn and many will feel uncomfortable. I believe this occurs because so many people have been damaged around the issue of money. They have been told that their value is tied up in how much they make, how much they are "worth."

People have been carrying around non-beneficial thoughts about money for a long time. Most of these thoughts have been passed on from generation to generation. Here are some of the more common ones.

1. Money is bad.
2. People who have lots of money are bad.
3. Money doesn't grow on trees.

4. There is never enough money.
5. Money is the root of all evil.
6. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.
7. Money is dirty. It is "filthy lucre."
8. People who have lots of money are therefore "filthy rich."
9. Money is hard to come by.
10. You should never take money, or any "good thing," for a favor.
11. Money talks.
12. Money corrupts.

With all these negative thoughts floating around, it's a wonder anyone has any kind of good experience around money. Yet the truth is, nearly everyone's *experience* around having money has been good. And herein lies a contradiction. For our most frequent thoughts about money (it's bad) run counter to our most frequent experience of money (it's great to have it!). So we have to go around lying about our experience of money in order to justify our root thought about money.

Because of this inner contradiction, and our need to make our root thought about money "right," most of us push money away from ourselves. First we make it nearly impossible for us to get it (or certainly enough of it). Then, if and when we do get some, we make ourselves "disappear it" as fast as we can!

Sound familiar?

And even when we finally have enough, or more than enough, we then spend our time trying to make sure that we'll get to keep as much as possible as long as possible, that we don't lose any of it. So our worries about money hardly leave us when we have it. It is, in fact, an irony of life that in many cases the more money people have, the more people worry about money!

All of this comes out of our deepest root thought, or Sponsoring Thought, about money, which is that there simply isn't enough.

> In fact, you have this root thought about just about everything. There's not enough money, there's not enough time, there's not enough love, there's not enough food, water, compassion in the world . . . whatever there is that's good, there's just not enough.
>
> *—Book 1, page 165*

This race consciousness of "not-enough-ness" creates and re-creates the world as you see it. It is time now to adopt a New Thought about all this. It's time to embrace a new, and to some a startling, concept.

Concept #28

There's enough.

These may just be the two most powerful words ever spoken.

I want you to read them again. Say them out loud.

If you are in a group, have each member of the group say them out loud. When the last person has done this, all of you say these words out loud together, in unison.

Do this now.

Good.

This one single truth—*"There's enough."*—deeply understood and firmly held in consciousness, could change the world.

Think of it! What do you think would happen tomorrow if everyone on the planet—every person, every organization, every company, every government—operated from the simple truth that *there's enough.* There's enough time, there's enough money, there's enough love, there's enough food, there's enough of *everything we think we need in order to be happy.* There's enough to go around!

Now think about this. Really. *What do you think would happen if everyone operated from that truth?*

Well, you're right. If everybody simply came to each human encounter with that attitude, with that understanding, with that knowingness, those encounters would be less defensive, less divisive, less destructive. In fact, they would probably not be defensive, divisive, or destructive at all.

Everything we are fighting about on this planet has at its base the root thought that there is something of which there is not enough. (Even wars of religion and ethnicity are based in the thought that there are "not enough people who think as we do; not enough people like us!")

If only there was enough (of *whatever* . . .), our problem would be solved, right? Well, the truth is, there is enough! And the proof is your own life. You want proof that there is "enough" of everything you need?

Notice that you're still here.

Of course, some people are not still here. Some people have died because they did not have enough food, enough shelter, enough clothing. But that is not because there was not enough of these things to go around. Far from it. There was more than enough. Those people died because those who had *more* than enough refused, or could not find a way, to give of what they had to those who had none.

Lack of the will to *share* is the problem, not lack of the *stuff* to share.

My mother used to say, "Where there's a will, there's a way."

She was right.

If the world's people had the will to make certain that four hundred humans did not die on this planet every hour from starvation, that would not happen. We would find a way to push through whatever political, cultural, behavioral, or physical barriers that stand in our way, and we would *get the food to them.* Whatever the local government corruptions, whatever the number of rebels stopping food trucks as they drive from the airport, we would *get the job done.* It is absurd to accept the weakling excuse that a world that can send men to the moon cannot join with sufficient willpower to get food to everybody who needs it.

No, the issue is seldom that there is not enough "stuff" and almost always that there is not enough will.

Do *you* have the will? Do you currently tithe 10 percent of everything you make to others?

Exercise

Take the following True/False test. This test is private. If you are working in a study group, take a moment to stop the group discussion and quietly complete the questions.

1. I made $1,200 or more last month, and gave $120 or more to my synagogue, temple, church, or other source of spiritual nourishment. ___True ___ False

2. I do not go to synagogue, temple, or church and cannot identify a "source of spiritual nourishment," but I gave $120 or more last month to a worthy charity or cause. ___True ___ False

3. I made less than $1,200 last month, but nevertheless gave 10 percent of all that I earned to church or charity. ___True ___ False

4. I spent $30 or more last month going to the movies, bowling, the theater, out to dinner, or other entertainments, including rental movies at home, and gave an equal amount to those in need through programs in my community. ___True ___ False

5. I wrote a letter last month to my congressman or senator asking that this country increase its efforts (not necessarily its expenditures, but its efforts) to help the poor here and abroad. ___True ___ False

6. I am currently a sponsor in the Save the Children campaign or some other organization, giving $20 a month to feed a hungry child. ___True ___ False

7. When I pass people asking for money on the street, I always give them some, no judgments and no questions asked. ___True ___ False

8. I see it as my personal responsibility to financially support programs that make mine a better community. ___True ___ False

9. I give as much each year to charity as I spend on my kids' sneakers and soccer league dues and equipment. If I smoke, I give the same amount to programs for the poor through my synagogue, temple, church, or other organization each month that I spend on tobacco. ___True ___ False

10. I make sure when I file my income tax return each year that I give fully of my fair share, so that those who depend on publicly supported programs may continue to benefit from them. ___True ___ False

Further Discussion:
Turn around your life by turning around your values

One of the chief reasons that more money doesn't flow into people's lives is that most people have their values reversed. Because they believe that money is "bad," they believe it is inappropriate to take money (especially large sums of money) for anything "good." Indeed, if a thing is judged very good by our society, it is usually valued *less* monetarily. So, as *CwG* says, "Your teachers make a pittance while your strip teasers make a fortune. Your leaders make so little compared to sports figures that they feel they have to steal to make up the difference. Your priests and rabbis live on bread and water while you throw coins at entertainers."

This "having it all backwards" produces a paradigm in which we insist that everything on which we place a high *intrinsic* value must *come cheaply.* In our mind the person who chooses the highest calling should receive the lowest pay. Thus we are scandalized when a minister or priest should happen to be driving a Cadillac. We pay puny wages to our research scientists fighting for a cure for AIDS, making them go begging for grants and government funding, while we support the giving of millions to

someone for trying to hit a little white ball thrown by another from a mound of dirt. If he manages to hit the ball safely three times out of ten, we offer him *zillions.*

What about you? What are *you* worth?

Exercise

Make a list of three things you do well and the amount of financial reward you believe those skills are worth in today's market.

THREE THINGS I DO WELL:	WHAT THAT IS WORTH:
1._____	_____
2._____	_____
3._____	_____

Now indicate on the lines below what you think each of these skills *should* be worth. Is it the same as you indicated above?

1._____ 2._____ 3._____

What did the above exercise tell you? Do you believe you are overpaid or underpaid for the work that you do? Do you see yourself as being paid "just right"?

One of the mistakes many people make around money is thinking that the only way it can come to them is in return for some kind of work. The fact that this is not true for an impressive number of people does not diminish their belief in this system. The system holds that "we do stuff and we get money for it." This idea helps to create a whole new thought system around it which holds that "we are what we do."

This thought, too, is false, as we will see in the following chapter. Right now, let's examine the first false thought. Money does not come to us only in return for some kind of work.

You know this, of course, And now you are going to prove it.

Exercise

Make a list below of as many ways as you can think of that money comes to people. Don't edit anything out. Just list the ways you can think of, without judgment. Use more paper if you need to.

Now go back and put a check mark next to every way that is acceptable to you, every way money comes to people that is okay with you.

Finally, go back once more and make a check mark next to each of the acceptable ways money is coming to you now.

What percentage of the total number of acceptable ways is bringing money to you right now? Are you getting money 50 percent of the acceptable ways? Twenty percent? What is your number? Write it in the space below.

_____%

What, if anything, does this tell you about your present potential for increasing the money flowing into your life? Discuss this now with your group, or write a statement about it in your journal.

All that is needed to reverse the fortunes in your life (if, indeed, you wish to do that) is to reverse your values around money and the belief system they have sponsored.

In short, to turn your life around, turn your values around.

First, begin to value more *monetarily* those things that you value highly *intrinsically*—and *demonstrate that* (The values you project will be the values projected onto you.)

Next, reverse your thought about what you believe your worth to be. No matter how much you value yourself—double it.

Then, choose to receive from the Universe all that you are worth—but do not limit the Universe to only one or two ways of getting you money. Do not make the mistake

of connecting money inflow to work outflow. There is no connection—and the truly rich people know that.

To pause and reflect

Experiment

This week, choose to receive money from at least one unexpected source. Remember, it doesn't matter how much. It may be a quarter you find on the sidewalk, or $10,000 you discover you've inherited. It is not, and it is never, about amount. It is only about flow. So for your beginning experiment, simply make a mental choice—"I receive money from an unexpected source this week."

If you want to *really* get the flow moving, choose to *be* an "unexpected source" of money for another this week. (For several others if you can manage it.) *Give some money away.* It doesn't matter to whom, or why. Just give it away. You will find that you have started the flow. Now get ready for money to begin flowing to you. This is because you cannot give away that which you do not have and so giving money to another is a dramatic statement to the Universe of what you see yourself having. And the Universe never denies you your picture of yourself.

Tell the study group next week about your experience. Share how long it took from your making the declaration above until the first unexpected money appeared in your life.

(There is no question that it will appear. Just watch for it, so that you don't miss it!)

Additional Inquiries
from chapter 11

1. What are some typical blocks to abundance?
2. What is the best way to change your thought system?
3. Where do most of our thoughts and beliefs come from?
4. God's joy comes from our compliance with His wishes. True or False?

CHAPTER 12

BEING VERSUS DOING

As we move through *CwG* toward its final chapters, we encounter some of the most important data in a book filled with extraordinary information. Chapter 12, in particular, contains at least three life-altering concepts. Concepts that shake the foundation of our present reality. For this reason, we've broken the chapter down into three sections in this companion. Like chapter 1, there is far too much material here to be taken in one gulp.

The three paradigm-shifting concepts in *CwG,* chapter 12, any *one* of which could remake your entire experience of life if applied daily, are:

1. You are a human being.
2. To want something is to push it away from you.
3. Your life has nothing to do with your body.

Now it sounds almost silly to say that the first of these concepts is profound. Yet its implications are enormous, and its meaning is only partially grasped by all but the most advanced among us.

In the CwG dialogue this concept was introduced within the context of some additional considerations about money. God's no dummy. He knows how to get our attention, and how to make immutable wisdom stick by applying it to practical everyday problems. And there is no problem more practical or more "everyday" than the problem of money.

For most people, money is a problem. That is true for the vast majority of people on this planet. For them, it is a constant challenge. Perhaps you have moved past this challenge. Perhaps you have mastered "the money game." If so, you are among the minority. You are a member of a very small group. Even so, keep reading. You can use this information to help others.

Probably the biggest misunderstanding I have encountered over and over again in people trying to figure out "the money game" is their thought about how it is that money comes to us. What makes money flow to us? How does it come to pass that another willingly gives us this stuff?

Most people believe (as noted in the previous chapter) that money comes to them in exchange for something they do. In this construction they see a *quid pro quo.* They give this, and they'll get that.

In truth, the arrival of money (and all good things) has nothing to do with what we're doing. It just *looks* that way. (And, I will admit, sometimes those appearances can be very convincing.)

Chapter 12 in *CwG* lays out a new thought system about all this. A thought system that suggests that it is what you are *being* that attracts to you the various experiences of your life (including the experience of financial abundance), not what you are *doing.*

> If you think your life is about doingness, you do not understand what you are about. Your soul doesn't care what you do for a living—and when your life is over, neither will you. Your soul cares only about what you're being while you're doing whatever you're doing. It is a state of beingness the soul is after, not a state of doingness.
>
> *—Book 1, page 170*

This is the job of the soul—and hence, your job, your "mission," your *purpose* on this planet and in this life. You are here to "be" something, not to "do" something. (It is through this "beingness" that you will "SAVE" [wake up] others. See page 138.)

Concept #29

You are a human being.

Be assured that this is more than a simple aphorism. In this statement is an enormous Truth. A truth that could change your life forever.

Many people imagine that the way to get to "beingness" (that is, to "be" happy, to "be" secure, to "be" peace) is to do certain things. It is a fact, for sure, that *everything we do is an attempt to achieve a State of Beingness.* With every action we are attempting to achieve a state of being. Did you know that? Have you ever thought of it this way? It is true.

Let me explain further.

Everything you do, you do for a *reason.* There is an *anticipated outcome.* This outcome has to do in almost every case with a phenomenon I have come to call "Havingness." That is to say, most of the things we do we do because we *hope to get something out of it.* There is something, when all is said and done, that we hope to "have" as a result of all this.

Now some people have a very difficult time admitting this. That's because they live within a belief system that suggests that "getting" and "having" is "bad," and that we should therefore "do" stuff not because it contributes to our own personal benefit, but for some higher reason. This they call "selfless giving."

In truth, there is no *such* thing *as selfless giving.* There is no *such thing as a selfless act.* Even the act of doing something selflessly is a *selfish* act, for it allows us to feel that we are doing something selflessly, and that is a good feeling. We "feel good about ourselves." Which, by the way, *is totally okay.*

I emphasize this because there are some who insist it is "wrong" to feel good about oneself. It is the ego exerting undue influence on us. It is this. It is that. It is Satan, for heaven's sake. In truth, it is none of these. Feeling good about yourself is all *you are trying to do here.* Because what you *are* is "good." You are, in reality, "that which is good." And all you are trying to do in your life is *experience yourself as exactly Who You Are.*

(The remarkable and poignant statement in *CwG* about Who You Are, which is reproduced on page 78 of this companion, should be read daily as a reminder of what God has to say about you.)

Let's be clear, then, that not only are there no selfless acts—no acts were ever *intended* to be selfless. Indeed, the whole *point of action itself is to produce an experience of the Self.*

Most people do not visualize it this way. They do not see what is actually going on. In most people's understanding, they are doing things in order to "get" things, and after they "have" those things, they think they will "be" something.

Perhaps they will be "happy." Or perhaps they will be "secure." Or perhaps they will be, finally, "at peace." These "states of beingness" are what they imagine will proceed from their having what they got by doing all they did!

Got it?

Good, because this is hard to follow.

Now, if you don't believe this theory of human behavior is correct (or if you'd like proof that it is), do the following exercise.

Exercise

Make an analysis of why you "do" certain things. Using the form below, list in column 2 what you imagine you will "get" out of the common, everyday "doingness" experiences shown in column 1. Then list in column 3 how you think you will feel after getting what you've listed in column 2.

(I've made the first several entries here from my own experience to give you an example of how this exercise is done.)

For many people all of life is a process of *doing* something in order to *have* something in order to *be* something. In this they have the Be-Do-Have paradigm reversed. They are trying to arrive at a state of beingness by moving into doingness. Yet the creative process works best the other way around. First decide what to "be" (that is, what state of beingness you wish to experience), then move into that beingness without doing anything.

(In my lectures I am fond of saying, "You don't have to do a damned thing. In fact, you should *stop* doing 'damned things.' Until you do, very little will work out for you, and you'll walk around muttering, 'Well, I'll be damned.'")

A Thing I Commonly Do	What I Think I Will "Get" When I Do This	What I Will "Be" (Feel) When I Get This
Go to work every day	A paycheck	Secure
Call my wife if I'm going to be late	My wife's thanks and approval	Happy
Use my turn signals	Where I'm going without injury	Safe
Your turn . . .		

Out of this beingness you will find that doingness will flow. Indeed, beingness fully experienced will *produce* doingness. And that doingness will be a reflection of the beingness that gave it birth.

Let me explain.

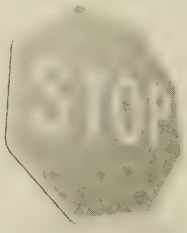
A person can either *do* something in order to "be happy," or a person can start the day by simply deciding to "be happy," and the things that person will *do* will automatically reflect that. You can either use doingness as a means of *getting* to beingness—or you can decide to *"already be there"—and let your doingness be a demonstration of that.*

Let's just try an experiment in your mind. Ask yourself this: If I simply decided, arbitrarily and as a result of nothing in particular, to "be happy" for the next hour or so, would it change in any way the things I say and do during that time?

Let's choose some other states of beingness. Suppose you decided, just because you thought it might be fun, to be seductive, to be sensual. Do you think you might speak and act any differently than you normally do? How about compassion? Do you think you could arbitrarily decide to "be compassionate"? And if you did, do you think it would change in any way the manner in which you behave, even for a short time? Of course it would. In every case it would.

The fact of the matter is (and this is one of the great secrets of life) you can choose to *be* in any state of beingness you wish, and you can *choose this ahead of time.* Your experience of *how you are being* does not have to be a reaction to what is going on around you. Quite to the contrary, what is going on around you can be a result of *how you are being.*

When you learn this, you begin to turn life upside down. You no longer react to situations, you create them. You move *from* a state of beingness, rather than trying to move into a state of beingness. There is a vast difference.



To pause and reflect

Assignment

Draw up a simple chart made up of seven squares running horizontally across a page. Label the squares S M T W TH F SA.

Now pick seven "states of being" (any seven that appeal to you) and write a state of being ("happy," "sensual," "compassionate," etc.) in each square.

Decide that each day during the coming week, you are going to choose ahead of time to "be" whatever you have written in that day's square. "Do" whatever it takes to "be" that. Keep

your beingness decision fresh in your mind throughout the day by leaving little notes to yourself, little reminders, all over the place ("Be HAPPY." "Be SENSUAL." "Be SECURE," etc.).

Work hard at this. Do not do anything that takes you away from your state of beingness for the day.

Keep a log of your experiences, and each night make detailed notes of how your day went, and how many times you consciously experienced yourself being what you chose to be ahead of time.

This is called Conscious Creation. You are literally creating your self. Or, more accurately, re-creating yourself anew. Do not be surprised if you experience this as the breakthrough moment of your life.

CHAPTER 12, SECTION 2
WANT NOT, WASTE NOT

God says you may not have anything you want. Now that may not be an easy statement to swallow, but it is the truth.

> Remember, you cannot have what you want, but you may experience whatever you have.
>
> —*Book 1, page 176*

The statement is founded on an even larger truth, covered in Concept 3 of this companion. Please go back to page 20 and review that Concept if you do not remember what it is.

If, at each of the three levels of creation, you are residing in a space of "wanting" something, *you may not have it.* This is because . . .

CONCEPT #30
To want something is to push it away from you.

How can this be true? How can God invite us to call upon Him whenever we are in need if this is so?

It is quite simple, and there are no contradictions here. We begin our understanding by remembering that your thought is creative, your word is creative, and your actions are creative. Indeed, your actions are creations in and of themselves, and serve to produce other creations.

Now if your thought about something (let's use money as our example here) is that you "want" it, and if your words about this speak of "wanting" it, and if you act as if this is something that you "want," then the Universe has no choice but to give you the experience you have called forth . . . namely, the *experience of wanting it.*

The Universe, you see, is a great big Xerox machine. Like a photocopier, it does not make judgments about what you put into it. It simply duplicates it.

Think of it this way: this particular copying machine is computerized. And the word "I" is the access code. "I" opens the program. Whatever you say following "I" (or "I am") is like a computer command. It tells the program what to do. And in this case the program is called "CREATION."

There is another way I like to use to help people truly understand the power of their thoughts, words, and actions. I say to them: "You are always praying."

They say, "What?"

And I repeat, "You are *always praying."*

Think of it. Imagine it. How would you feel, what would you change, if you lived within a paradigm that announced that every thought, word, and deed is a prayer?

Your statements are your requests. So if you say *"I want money,"* and if you say it often enough, you will get exactly that. You will find yourself *wanting money.*

To put this yet another way, think of it as self-description. When you use the word "I" you are just describing yourself, and what is true for you. The Universe has no choice but to agree with your description and to produce that in your reality.

For all the reasons above, I can say without equivocation: *never ask God for anything.*

Thank God instead.

The greatest prayer is a prayer of thanksgiving.

A Master is one who is grateful in *advance* for that which is chosen. A Master does not "want," ever. For a Master knows that to want something is to waste it. That is to say, you will waste the fact that *you already have it.*

God says in *CwG* that we already have everything we could ever want. This is not new information. It has come from other sources as well. ("Even before you ask, I will have answered.") In *CwG, Book 2* it is explained that there is no such thing as Time, only

the Eternal Moment of Now. Therefore, everything you have ever had, or ever will have, you *have right now.* You simply don't know it. You are not aware of it. You are not conscious of its being there.

You are walking around unconscious.

Masters do not walk around unconscious. Masters are consciously aware that whatever they choose is already given them, already present. It is simply a matter of enlarging one's consciousness to experience that. So a Master *always* prays a prayer of thanks. *Gratitude . . .* says a Master *. . . is the attitude.*

A Course in Miracles inspired me to use the most powerful prayer I have ever heard.

"Thank you, God, for helping me to understand that this problem has already been solved for me."

Have you ever heard a more powerful prayer? I think not. The work of the student who would seek mastery is to change attitude. This means changing every thought, word, and deed.

As a start, try the exercise below.

Exercise

On the next two pages is a chart with a list of topics covering many aspects of life as a human being. Beneath each topic is a statement often heard from people about that subject. In the space beneath the statement, write a new statement that more closely reflects the truth that has been presented here.

You may want to continue this exercise (in fact, I suggest that you do) by coming up with at least six other topics (and more if you've got them) and filling in the boxes for each. Brainstorm in your study group to pick topics and to decide on an "often heard statement." Then have each member create a "new statement about this topic." Share these new thoughts in the group.

If you are working alone, create some of the above forms in your journal and pick more topics about which you'd like to move into a new thought.

This is the *New Thought Movement* you've heard so much about. Now you know what it's really *all about!*

TOPIC: Money

A STATEMENT OFTEN HEARD ABOUT THIS TOPIC:
"I need more money in my life and I want it right now."

A NEW STATEMENT ABOUT THIS TOPIC WHICH EMBODIES THE TRUTH I NOW KNOW:

TOPIC: Sex

A STATEMENT OFTEN HEARD ABOUT THIS TOPIC:
"I wish I had more sex in my life. I want more romance."

A NEW STATEMENT ABOUT THIS TOPIC WHICH EMBODIES THE TRUTH I NOW KNOW:

TOPIC: Love

A STATEMENT OFTEN HEARD ABOUT THIS TOPIC:
"I want someone to love in my life! Someone who will love me. Is that so much to ask?"

A NEW STATEMENT ABOUT THIS TOPIC WHICH EMBODIES THE TRUTH I NOW KNOW:

TOPIC: God

A STATEMENT OFTEN HEARD ABOUT THIS TOPIC:
"I'm not even sure if I believe in God. Why doesn't He answer my prayers?"

A NEW STATEMENT ABOUT THIS TOPIC WHICH EMBODIES THE TRUTH I NOW KNOW:

Further Discussion:
Why "affirmations" seldom work

By now you may have concluded that all we have done here is create a series of affirmations. Well, perhaps. Yet these "affirmations" differ from the affirmations used by most people in the New Thought Movement, from my observation.

If I have heard it once, I have heard it a thousand times. "My affirmations don't work! I do them and do them and do them, and they don't work. I think them, I write them, I speak them, but they just don't work." There is a reason for this. Affirmations seldom work when they are announcements of what we want to be so. They almost always work when they are declarations of what is *already* so.

And you must not simply believe it is already so. You must *know it.* Knowing and believing are not the same thing. "Knowing" requires a level of faith far above anything ever involved in "believing." You can "believe" a thing, and that is good. But if you absolutely "know" a thing that is infinitely better. One can step off a ledge believing one will not fall, and one can step off a ledge *knowing* one will not fall. There is a quantum difference. It is a *felt* difference.

With belief there is always doubt. At least a tiny bit of doubt. That is why we call it "belief." With knowing, all doubt is erased. There is *no doubt about* it.

Over and over again I have seen people working with affirmations such as "I am rich beyond my wildest dreams," or "I have my perfect mate." Sometimes teachers even tell students to put a date to the affirmation, as in, "I will find my perfect mate by June."

The problem is, you must *know* that the statement is *true for you now* in order for the affirmation to be effective. And many people cannot move to a level of awareness sufficient to see the truth in statements such as "I am rich beyond my wildest dreams." They make such an affirmation and their mind shouts, "The hell you say!"

So here is a trick. Use affirmations that declare what you can accept as true for you now. As you see these affirmations manifesting in your life, you will expand your "ability to know." Then you will know even larger truths. And larger. And even larger still. Soon you will become *a real Know-It-All!*

Using one of the issues above, here is an affirmation, a "new thought," which most people can move into without doubting: "My perfect mate is coming to me now."

You may think this is just playing with words, but I want you to know that such a small twist in the verbiage has done more than simply change words. It has changed lives.

And yes, I am aware of the argument that this is a weak affirmation, because if we keep saying it, then we will create our perfect mate as always being "on the way" and never arriving. But when working with New Thought in this way, we must always begin where we are, start with what we can accept. If a person can accept this perfect mate is on the way, that produces a whole new mindset, which can create a whole new reality. Trust me. I have seen it work.

To pause and reflect

Assignment

This week think about what you are thinking. Say something about what you are saying. Do something about what you are doing. Know and understand that your thoughts, words, and actions do create your reality.

Keep a running log, in writing, of how you think, speak, and act this week. Make up this log by subject matter. Pick out ten subjects that swirl around your life. Then, for each of the next seven days, notice what you are creating with regard to these aspects of your experience. Keep close track.

Report to your study group next week, or, if you are working through this companion alone, make an important entry in your journal seven days from now.

CHAPTER 12, SECTION 3
YOU'RE NOBODY

It is interesting that millions of parents in this world work like the devil in the hope that their children can one day "be somebody." There is no devil, of course, but if there were, this is exactly what he would want us to do. So here is some advice. Work like a *God,* so that one day your children can be *nobody.*

There is not a single idea more destructive to the human race than the idea that we are our bodies. If you think you are your body, you will make all kinds of choices, selections, and decisions that will produce little or no benefit to you. Perhaps you've already noticed this.

The seemingly inexorable desecration of our planet, the wars that have killed millions upon millions through the centuries, the indignities, humilities, and actual pain suffered by people every day the world over—all of this is due to one massive misunderstanding. We think we are our bodies.

Nothing could be further from the truth. And living such a thought places *us* farther and farther from the truth. It places the entire human race as far from the truth as it could possibly be. Such a life has nothing to do with reality. It is unreal.

Have you ever said to yourself when reading the newspaper or watching the horrors of the nightly news on television, "Man, this is *unreal* . . ."?

Well, you're right. It is. And the challenge facing humankind as it moves through the first decade of the New Millennium is whether we intend to "get real," or keep making the same choices and producing the same results.

It is difficult not to identify with your body. After all, this is "you." At least it sure *seems* as though this is "you." It is the only "you" that you have ever known, that's for sure.

Or is it?

Have you ever known "another" you? Have you ever in your life felt you'd gotten in touch with another part of yourself? How would you describe that part? What did it feel like?

However it felt, if you've ever had this experience you may not be quite so sure that this body of yours *is* Who You Really Are. In fact, quite to the contrary. You may now feel very sure that it is *not.*

Those who have had such transcendental experiences (we are said to "transcend" the body in such moments) often change their whole way of living as a result.

> There comes a time in the evolution of every soul when the chief concern is no longer the survival of the physical body, but the growth of the spirit; no longer the attainment of worldly success, but the realization of Self.
>
> *—Book 1, page 180*

Actually, your life is not about what your body is doing . . . yet what your body is doing is a reflection of what your life is about.

This is another way of saying that your body *shows everyone* what your life is about, but your life is not about what your body does. Your life is about what you are. And what you become. And what you have become is in *evidence* in everything the body does.

I will say it again. Your life is about what *you are.* And you are a great deal more than your body. You are your body, your mind, and your soul, a combination of all three. What your body is doing day to day is an *indication* of what that combination is—not the *creator* of it.

And so we come to another wisdom of life-altering proportions.

Concept #31

Your life is not about your body.

This is an incredible statement. And particularly since the largest number of people alive think that life *is* about the body, its implications are staggering.

Most people create entire life scenarios based on their thought that they are their body. Major decisions are made, choices are implemented that people hope and believe will bring benefit, succor, protection, comfort, and yes, physical satisfaction and happiness, to their body and to the bodies of those they love.

If we thought we were not our bodies, where would that leave us? What reason would we have to be, do or have anything? That's a very good question. It is a question *CwG* encourages us to explore.

If we explore it deeply enough we will discover that the answer is this: we would be a thing, we would do a thing, we would choose to have a thing not because of what benefit we felt it might be to our body, but because of what benefit it might be to our soul.

We would see each act as an act of self-definition. We would select or reject an act, a word, a thought based on our idea about ourselves and how well the thought, word, or act advanced that idea. We would see each of life's rapidly presenting options as being either in harmony or in disharmony with Who We Are and who we Choose To Be, and we would then simply have to decide whether we really choose to be that, or just say that we do.

Exercise

Accept for the moment that the above concept is true, literally. If your life did not need to have anything to do with your body, or pleasing, caring for, or protecting the body of another, what—if anything—would change in the way you live?

Feel free to extend this list if you like, adding items that allow you to look more deeply into yourself.

Further Discussion:
Going off the deep end

Freeing as this kind of information, and exercise, may be, it is important not to take it too far. *CwG* warns against this kind of overreaction (see pages 180–181). Tempting as it may be to ignore matters of the body, once one realizes that one's life has nothing to do with the body, it would be wasteful to fail to take care of the body. It would not

With Regard to My . . .	HERE IS WHAT I WOULD CHANGE
. . . marriage, or my experience of romantic partnership . . .	
. . . job, or my experience of career and "right livelihood" . . .	
. . . lifestyle, or my experience of environment, personal activities, and friendships . . .	
. . . hobbies, or my experience of myself in my leisure time . . .	
. . . money, or my experience of how I spend what I make, and on what . . .	
. . . sexuality, or my experience of my sensual self . . .	
. . . spirituality, or my experience of my Higher Self . . .	

be an honoring of the Temple of your Being. Honor this temple, honor your body. But do not build your life and all of your decisions around it.

If you make all of your daily choices and decisions based on what it does for your body, you will wind up spending many years engaged in activities—what I call "doing-ness"—having nothing to do with your soul. Your soul will feel empty. You will wonder what your life has been all about.

The interesting thing about this is that no one else will care, no one is keeping score, no one is watching. No one even has a judgment about how it all turns out. Not even God.

In the end, it's just us and our Selves. Just us and Us.

And it is when we let ourselves down, when we pay attention to body-doingness only, with no focus on the larger aspects of life, that we create the most emptiness in our life—and the most disappointment.

The irony of all this is that we are doing it to ourselves. It is as the late cartoonist Walt Kelly observed through the voice of his deliciously wry character *Pogo:*

"We have met the enemy, and they is us."

To pause and reflect

Experiment

Let's try a lab experiment this week. When you have a choice to make in the coming seven days, no matter what that choice is about (something as simple as what to have for lunch or as complex as what to do next in your relationship or at your job), see if you can bring to mind first, before you make any moves or announcements, your grandest idea about yourself. Then measure your current options against that idea, and see if any of them fit.

See how often you can do this during the week, and in what way, if at all, it impacts your decision-making process. Bring the results of your experiment to the study group next time, or write them in your journal.

Additional Inquiries
from chapter 12

1. What are the sources of "doing" and "being"?
2. The human soul is seeking to be God. True or False?
3. Sometimes in life "bad" things happen to you that are not in your best interest. True or False?
4. What are the roles of the soul, the mind, and the body in our earthly experience?
5. While it may not be the most enlightened way, obedience to God will produce salvation. True or False?
6. When does the soul achieve its goal of finally "knowing itself in its own experience"?
7. God says that as creative beings we can have anything we want. True or False?
8. What thought or attitude will bring our desires into reality?
9. At the time of what we call our death, we drop the body, but remain alive in our soul. True or False?
10. Through all our many lifetimes the blueprint (original idea) of Who We Really Are is held by_____
11. God's only judgment about our life comes after our death. True or False?
12. What things do we need to do to be truly happy?
13. It is spiritually inappropriate to insist on doing work or other activity that enhances your soul if that results in a reduced quality of life for your dependents. True or False?

CHAPTER 13

JUST FOR THE HEALTH OF IT

I must admit I wouldn't have predicted it, but . . . one of the most controversial parts of *Conversations with God, Book 1* was, after all was said and done, the chapter on *health.*

We must all be pretty attached to our vices, because of the very few letters of disagreement I received on the book (less than a hundred letters out of six thousand received to date have been negative), more focused on these sections than any other passage . . . and this is a book filled with some fairly outrageous stuff.

The drinking of alcohol, in particular, must be a favorite activity among human beings, judging from the readers' response to *CwG's* pronouncement on this subject. And just what was the inflammatory statement that caused all the uproar?

> The body was not meant to intake alcohol. It impairs the mind.
> *—Book 1, page 191*

Of all that was written in this book, I would have thought that statement to be among the most benign. So there you have it. As a population, we're pretty attached to

our booze. We like our red meat, too, and both are killing us. Yet if that isn't sufficient to do the job, millions of us will guarantee the result with tobacco.

Some of *you,* reading this companion right now, are probably doing all three.

Now there's nothing "wrong" with this. "Right" and "wrong" are judgments, not realities. We've already established that. Just be honest enough to admit what you're doing. Step out of denial and into truth. Tell your loved ones straight up, "Look, I know this stuff is not doing me any good, but, you see, I am a wimp and a weakling and I can't stop myself." Or, if that is not how you see yourself, then say, "Actually, I am not a weakling, and I *can* stop this. I just don't choose to. I know all this stuff may even shorten my life, but, you see, I don't care. And I know that you care, because you love me and want me around as long as you can have me, but I obviously don't care about that, either."

Or, if *that* is not your truth, you can always retreat into the New Age Protection Zone. You can say, "My thought creates my reality, and my thought is that this stuff won't hurt me."

Aside from the fact that there are very few beings presently on the planet whose individual thought-power has been demonstrated to be greater than the co-creative power of collective consciousness, this argument should fly.

It is ironic that while most people choose to cling tenaciously to their own downfalls, one of the most difficult things for many to accept about human health is that each of us is responsible in the matter. Bad health is not something that happens *to* us, it happens *because* of us. (The same is true of good health, of course.)

There are a thousand and one ways this cause-and-effect relationship plays itself out in our lives—which is what makes it so difficult to *see* the relationship, much less fully understand it.

Precisely because there are so many intertwinings in the fabric of our experience, it becomes nearly impossible to follow the thread from Point A to Point B—from this Cause to that Effect—when it comes to our health. And as soon as we *do* come up with evidence from our science labs that such and such behavior causes damage to the human organism, a chorus of nay-sayers rises up to poo-poo it.

So, yes, it is difficult for us to see the part we have played in creating the illnesses with which we have been afflicted. Yet this doesn't make it any less true that . . .

Concept #32

Your health is your creation.

Most people cannot see themselves as creative, or responsible for, the condition with which they've just been diagnosed, or the heart attack they had last year, or even the headache they've just acquired, much less more exotic diseases such as atherosclerosis or Parkinson's or Alzheimer's. How does a little child participate in the creation of her own debilitating muscular dystrophy?

That's a fair question. We're pretty sure she didn't willfully call it upon herself. It was not an act of conscious choice. Does that mean it was unconscious?

Yes.

In the sense that "unconscious" can mean that which is not done deliberately, that which was not intentional at the conscious human level, yes . . . this choice was "unconscious."

There is no way for us to know the individual path of another soul. It is not part of the plan for us to be aware of the purpose and intentions of another spirit as it once again takes on physical form. But this much we do know. Nothing—not a single thing—happens in God's world that is not with good reason. Everything that occurs in the incarnation experience of an individual soul occurs at the *behest* of that soul, as a result of the *creations* of that soul, or of the *co-creations* in which it has engaged with others what might be called the creations of the Collective Consciousness. (This creates a large part of our reality.) Either way, *CwG* leaves no room for doubt. It makes its statement on this subject clearly and without equivocation.

> . . . all illness is self created. Even conventional medical doctors are now seeing how people make themselves sick. Most people do so quite unconsciously . . . so when they get sick, they don't know what hit them. It feels as though something has befallen them, rather than that they did something to themselves.
>
> *—Book 1, page 187*

So yes, we create our own health (consciously or unconsciously) from the earliest moments of our life to the last. We are creating both collectively and individually, with each level of creation playing its effect on the overall experience we call life.

If your consciousness is high enough to overcome individually the cumulative effects of the collective creations of humankind, or what you have been *told* will happen, then you *can* act with impunity in what you eat, what you drink, what you do with your life. You will not be damaged or harmed. The "new agers" after all have it right. It is just a matter of consciousness.

So let's see where your consciousness lies—by your own assessment. (No one else's matters.) Take the test below.

Exercise

Give yourself five minutes to complete the following self-evaluation.

SELF-EVALUATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

1. On a scale of 1–10 (and understanding that these things fluctuate from moment to moment), I observe my spiritual awareness and consciousness to be, most of the time, at a level of

_____

2. This level is sufficient to overcome the negative effects of the collective consciousness and the co-creations of those around me.

____True ____False

3. I believe and know that—because of my present consciousness about it—I can ward off any negative effect, impact, or damage to my physical organism that others claim might result from the following activities *(check those you feel sure about) :*

___Smoking ___Drinking ___Eating red meat ___Using marijuana
___Mainlining cocaine ___Having unprotected sex with a stranger
___Driving fast ___Eating fatty foods ___Jumping off buildings

4. I am an Immortalist and know I have the ability to live in my present physical body as long as I wish, without limitation.
____True ____False

5. If I *am* confronted in the future with an undesirable health condition, I feel I am now of sufficient consciousness to affect a spontaneous healing of those conditions I have checked below:

___Headache ___Toothache ___Lung cancer ___Influenza
___Indigestion ___Heart attack ___Sexually transmitted diseases
___Leukemia ___Ulcers ___Colon cancer ___Hemorrhoids
___Any disease or illness

6. There is no reason to change any of my behaviors because my consciousness creates my reality, and in my reality I will never be sick as a result of anything I eat, drink, or do.
____True ____False

7. My past experience supports the above statement.
____True ____False

Further Discussion:
Changing your life, extending your life

It takes a great deal of determination to change one's life. Most of us have not demonstrated that level of willingness in the past. That doesn't mean we can't start tomorrow. It is also true that it is not necessary to do so.

The above test gives you an idea of where your consciousness lies with regard to this item in your life called health. If you feel that your consciousness is not yet sufficiently

developed to overcome any unwanted outcome or condition, it may be useful now for you to explore some health alternatives that could serve you in the years ahead.

Exercise

Have a roundtable discussion of this whole health question now with your study group. You may want to read the first few pages of *CwG,* chapter 13 aloud, having one person read my words and others read the responses I received. Read from the beginning of the chapter to the bottom of page 193. That should take only about fifteen minutes. How does the information here square with your own belief system? How does it differ?

What impact, if any, does this information have on your ideas about your future? What impact do you choose for it to have?

If you are working alone with this companion, do the reading aloud as suggested (you may even want to record it), then answer the above questions in your journal. (Here again it is suggested that you may find the already recorded audio book of *CwG* most helpful.)

To pause and reflect

Assignment

During the coming week take an inventory of your healthy (and unhealthy) behaviors, using the form below. Bring your results to next week's group for discussion, or place them in your journal.

MY HEALTH BEHAVIORS INVENTORY:

At present I would describe my overall health as . . .
____ good ____ fair ____ not good ____ bad

Here is a look at some of the behaviors I exhibit over a seven-day period, together with my assessment of whether those behaviors are beneficial (marked with a *B*), or non-beneficial (marked with an *N*). *(Your assessment will, of course, be based on where your consciousness is about these things, whether you believe you have overcome Collective Consciousness, etc.)*

MONDAY: _____
_____

TUESDAY: _____
_____

WEDNESDAY: _____
_____

THURSDAY: _____
_____

FRIDAY: _____
_____

SATURDAY: _____
_____

SUNDAY: _____
_____

If these forms do not provide you with enough room, please use any form or diary that works best for you.

The idea is for you to simply keep track of what you are feeding, and doing with, your physical form over seven days, placing a B *or an* N *after each entry.*

At the end of the week, add up the total number of entries, then figure the percentage of B *entries and the percentage of* N *entries.*

Share this with your study group.

CHAPTER 13, SECTION 2
YOUR TRUE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

The second half of *CwG,* chapter 13 opens doors onto the most important question of all time. What is our true relationship with God?

From the beginning of time human beings have sought to know more about that relationship, or if such a relationship even existed. For centuries it has been our religions that have sought to unravel this mystery for us, but all they have done is create more mystery. They have generated more questions than answers, more taboos than revelations, more fear of God than love of God.

> Religion is your attempt to speak of the unspeakable. It does not do a very good job.
>
> *—Book 1, page 195*

Most of us in today's culture have been affected by religion in one way or another, even if we've never belonged to one. At this point in your study of the CwG material, let's take a look at what your experience of religion has been.

EXCERCISE

Fill out the chart below.

My religious experience as a child was:

This led to the following conception of God:

. . . which in turn produced this relationship with God:

. . . as a result, here are the main things religion has taught me:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

The revelations in chapter 13 create an opportunity to form a new relationship with God that may be more functional than any you have previously experienced. This relationship will be soundly based in . . .

Concept #33

You are part of the body of God.

This revelation astounds the mind, for most of us cannot conceive of ourselves in this way. Once again, rereading the material in the actual book is recommended here, for this material will allow you to experience, better than anything that could be written here, the full implication of what came through in this portion of the dialogue.

Exercise

Hold a roundtable discussion now with your study group on this whole question of our relationship with God. You may want to read the last few pages of *CwG,* chapter 13 aloud, having one person read my words and others read the responses I received. Read from page 197 to the end of the chapter. That should take only about fifteen minutes. In the discussion that follows, be sure to ask these questions:

How does the information here square with your own belief system? How does it differ?

What impact, if any, does this information have on your ideas about your relationship with God? What impact do you choose for it to have?

If you could create a relationship with God in any way you wished, what would that look like for you?

If you are working alone with this companion, answer the above questions in your journal after rereading the pages noted.

Further Discussion:
Have I not said "Ye are Gods"?

Of course, the largest message of *CwG* is that all of us are Gods. Again, for many this is difficult to accept. Not so much because it does not seem likely that it could be true, but more often because of the responsibility it places upon all of us if it *is* true.

It is much easier for us to imagine ourselves as the *victim* of an unhappy life, not the *creator* of it; as being an *effect* of the world around us, not *at cause* in the matter.

We cannot imagine ourselves to be the *cause* of most of what we see going on around us. And perhaps individually we are not. Yet by extension—and through the ultimate logic of what evidences itself in the Truth that we are all One—we *are* creating what we are seeing. This point the text of *CwG* makes over and over again. And in *Book 2,* the point is made even more clearly as it regards planetary conditions, world events, and global consciousness. The time that it takes between cause and effect sometimes makes it difficult for us to see this relationship. We don't recognize (re-cognize: to *know again*) that we have, individually or through Collective Consciousness, caused that.

The truth is, as we look at the world around us, we cannot escape responsibility for any of it. Moreover, we would do better not to wish to. For as *CwG* says, only when we can accept responsibility for all of it can we begin to change any of it.

If "how things are" is no longer the experience we choose, then we must each work to change it. And we must begin today, for there is much to be done. It is as John Kennedy said over a quarter century ago. We may not be finished within the first hundred days, nor within the first thousand days, but let us begin.

If you have not read the second book in the Conversations with God trilogy, let me urge you right now to do so—right now.

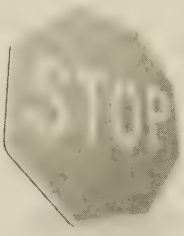
CwG, Book 2 may be one of the most extraordinary books to come along in a long time in the field of esoteric/spiritual/political/economic and social literature. In it, God invites us to create a revolution in our social, sexual, psychological, philosophical, educational, political, economical, and theological lives the likes of which has never before been visited upon this planet. A blueprint is presented for shifting the paradigm and changing the order of things, a blueprint that will turn everything topsy-turvy . . . but not upside down.

In fact, things will at last be *right side up*

You're invited to take part in all this. Not as a bystander, but as a way-shower. Not as one of the changed, but as one of the changers.

It was John Kennedy's brother Bobby who uttered these words . . . words I hope I never forget:

Some people see things as they are and ask, "Why?" I see things as they could be and ask, "Why not?"



To pause and reflect

Assignment

Start a Changer Journal right now. Decide to be one of The Changers, and place in the journal a notation each day. Design the pages to look like this:

What I did today to make my world better:

_____

_____

What I said today to make my world brighter:

_____

_____

What I shared today to make my world richer:

_____

_____

How I intend to use my life to change the world:

_____

_____

Additional Inquiries
from chapter 13

1. What percentage of illness is self-created and what percentage is created by germs and/or accident?
2. What forms of mental activity cause most of our illnesses?
3. What attitude is required to heal the body once it is sick?
4. Name some ways to prevent illness.
5. How long could the body last if we cared for it properly?
6. Which is correct, Darwin's theory of evolution or the Creationist theory?
7. What is the greatest barrier to our learning the truth?
8. The resurrection of Jesus is part of religious mythology that never really happened. True or False?
9. What is the ultimate secret regarding our true relationship to God?
10. There is nothing in reality, not even the "devil" or the dog poop on the grass, which is not part of God. True or False?
11. What is the only limit on what we can become?

CHAPTER 14

THE PRAYER THAT NEVER ENDS

The fourteenth and final chapter of *CwG, Book 1* is a rapid-fire summary of the remaining of my questions asked earlier, but not covered before in the book. These questions are given brief answers. Some are covered in much greater detail in later installments of the trilogy, in particular, the topic of sex in a major section of *Book 2* and the subjects of karma, psychic ability, reincarnation, and life on other planets in *Book 3*. Likewise, they are explored more deeply and more experientially in the chapters that follow here.

Perhaps the most impactful of the short commentaries comprising the closing chapter of *Book 1* are the responses to my inquiries about human sexuality. In these replies I received a tiny glimpse of the mind-opening, heart-expanding, let-me-tell-you-what-it's-*really*-all-about explanations of human sexuality given to me in *Book 2*.

If the closing pages of *Book 1* lack great detail in the examination of sex, they lack nothing in candor. God tells us rather directly to play with sex, and that it was meant to be wonderful fun. It is something to *celebrate* and to experience without shame. This, we are told pointedly, is not how most of the human family experiences it.

> You have repressed sex, even as you have repressed life, rather than fully self expressing, with abandon and joy.
>
> You have shamed sex, even as you have shamed life, calling it evil and wicked, rather than the highest gift and the greatest pleasure.
>
> *—Book 1, page 207*

What can we do about this now? How can we change things if we choose to? By knowing . . .

Concept #34

All of life is a conversation with God.

God created nothing shameful. It is a shame that *we* have *created shame around the creations of God.*

We are so ashamed of our bodies that we will not let our children use the correct words for some of their most beautiful parts, and wouldn't dream of letting them see *our* parts.

We are so ashamed of that which attracts us to each other that we cover up (in most countries by law) every part of the body (in some countries, even the face) that could be defined as alluring, lest we fall prey to the what we have for some reason chosen to call our basest desires.

We are so ashamed of our sexual functions that we perform them most often in the dark with a "Shhh! Don't let them *hear* you" attitude, rather than with sheer abandon and an openness that declares that this *is* a joyful celebration of life, and yes, part of our ongoing conversation with God.

If the experience of your own sexuality has been even a little like this, it is possible you may wish to change that. The exercise below may help you to determine both your present attitudes about sex and whether or not you really wish to move into new sexual awareness, experience, and celebration.

Exercise

Answer the questionnaire below, being as open and honest as you can. You will not have to share your answers, but you will also not be restricted from doing so. The ques-

tions have to do with the more intimate and private aspects of your life. If you are uncomfortable answering the questions, do not do so.

SEXUAL SURVEY

1. When I was a child I was told about sex and how it works by my parents. ___True ___False

2. I often saw may father or my mother nude, and seeing a naked body was not an unusual thing in our house, nor was it considered "inappropriate" or shameful. ___True ___False • It is not considered inappropriate or shameful among family or loved ones in my present household either. ___True ___False

3. The words "vagina" and "penis" were normal parts of my childhood vocabulary. ___True ___False

4. My first sexual experience was (check as many as apply):

___joyful ___scary ___damaging ___something of which I felt ashamed ___something about which I felt pleased and happy ___experienced against my will ___kept secret for a long time ___openly and joyously acknowledged ___just as I had always hoped and imagined it would be ___a nightmare I am still not really over

5. Presently I find sex to be (check as many as apply):

___a duty, more or less ___a pure joy ___adventuresome ___actually, rather boring ___less than what I'd really like ___just right as it is ___something I seldom discuss with my children ___something I openly discuss with my children ___a little embarrassing to talk about with anybody ___okay to talk about with almost anybody

6. I could watch an x-rated movie with explicit sexual activity and be totally comfortable. ___True ___False
   I would actually enjoy it. ___True ___False

7. I am the mirrors-on-the-bedroom-ceiling type who celebrates my sexuality with earthy abandon. ___True ___False • I love sex and don't mind saying it. ___True ___False

8. I would go to an all nude beach any time. ___True ___False

9. I think nudist camps and sunbathing associations are unwholesome places and simply excuses for exhibitionists and voyeurs to take off their clothes. ___True ___False

10. I think sex outside of marriage is natural and okay, enjoyed responsibly. ___True ___False

11. If I could change the experience of my own sexuality that I am having today in any way, here's how I would have it be:

_____

_____

_____

12. I think sex should be a private matter that is best not discussed this openly. Even completing this questionnaire was uncomfortable for me. ___True ___False

Did you have any unusual response to this exercise? What did you feel as you were answering the questions? Did your answers tell you anything about yourself? Can you

share this with your study group? If you are using this book individually, make an entry in your journal.

Further Discussion:
The prayer that never ends

I have taken to telling my audiences all across this country that life itself is a never-ending prayer. I believe that everything in life would change, and all the world would be better for it, if more people understand that.

Everything in life is a conversation with God—even the things we do in the dead of night, in the moments of our lustiest passion as well as our most tender sharing.

If you can imagine God in your bedroom and still be comfortable, knowing that God is laughing, sharing, enjoying, caring, and experiencing *with* you the most vulnerable and intimate moments of your life, then you can imagine God in almost any other context as well—and that is good, because God is present in *every* context, and it is about time we got used to having Her there.

No. It's larger than that. We should *prefer* having Him there.

We should want it no other way.

So tomorrow, as you go through your day, think of your thoughts, your words, your every action as your end of a continuing Conversation with God. Through these devices and in this conversation, you declare who and what you are.

Are you pleased with the announcements you made yesterday? Are you hungry to make even grander announcements today? Are you inspired by your own ideas about tomorrow?

If not, why not?

If so, good for you.

And for us.

To pause and reflect

Assignment

Answer the questions below sometime during the next week. Come back next week prepared to discuss your answers. If you are not in the study group, in about two weeks revisit the answers you have placed in your journal. Look to see how you feel about them then. Then, in lieu of discussion with other class members, have a "discussion with yourself" about which answer, if any, you wish had been different—and which, if any, you would now like to change.

What do you think is the most important single message of CwG?
Did this book change you at all? If so, in what way?
What is, now, the grandest version of the greatest vision you have about yourself?
How often are you committed to having your own communication with God?

Additional Inquiries
from chapter 14

1. We are not her to learn our spiritual lessons. True or False?
2. Life provides us a chance to pay off our karmic debt. True or False?
3. Psychic ability is real, and some people are "psychic" while others are not. True or False?
4. While sex is wonderful, lots of pictures of naked people having sex produces moral decay. True or False?
5. Is there life on other planets?
6. When will God leave us? What could cause Her to do so?

CHAPTER 15

MOVING ON TO *BOOK 2*

The first book in the Conversations with God series lays the groundwork for an astonishing and expanding view of the nature of God, the purpose of life, the eternal journey of the soul, and the path to peace, joy, and fulfillment during our physical experience on the Earth.

Each of the remaining books in the CwG series has as its characteristic a spiraling back over previous insights (offering the person coming to the CwG concepts for the first time a contextual basis for what follows) and a surging forward into new spiritual concepts and life principles that significantly enlarge the cosmology.

Because of this spiraling back, the sections in this CwG companion that focus on *Books 2* and *3* are somewhat smaller than the section that deals with *Book 1.* Taken as a whole, the *Companion* offers an extraordinarily comprehensive overview of the major messages in the opening trilogy of *Conversations with God.*

The first book deals almost exclusively with personal issues and questions relating to my own experience as I entered into this remarkable encounter. *Book 2* expands the conversation to include many less personal matters and address issues more focused on the collective experience of humanity. This second book directs itself more toward the

specific social and political issues of our day and time than any other entry in the nine-book CwG series. It discusses life as it is being lived and as it *could* be lived by the collective called humanity.

Indeed, in this remarkable second book God suggests nothing less than a social, political, and economic revolution on our planet. In the foreword to the paperback edition released in 2003, I observed that we are living in a different world. Things are not the way they were when *Book 2* was originally published. Yet, not a word in it is outdated. In fact, *the exact opposite is true.* The book may well have been ahead of its time. What is certain is that the words in *Book 2* are more relevant today than ever.

Those who have read the book, and who made it a *New York Times* bestseller, have called it easily the most controversial in the original Conversations with God trilogy. Just a few paragraphs into the first chapter, the controversy begins. You would not think that the statement found there would be controversial, but it turns out that it is. The essence of the statement is that we should all tell the truth to everyone about everything all the time.

People have been asking me for many years now how they can have their own conversations with God, how they can make their own personal connection with the Divine. *Book 2* answers this question directly in its twenty-third paragraph. It tells us that God is not apart from us in any way, and so we do not have to expend the *effort* to "make a connection" with the Divine. Then it reveals to us a great secret: *the way to connect with God is to connect with other human beings.*

> And so the fastest way to "find God," I've discovered, is to find each other. To stop hiding out from each other. And, of course, to stop hiding out from ourselves.
>
> The fastest way to stop hiding out is to tell the truth. To everyone. All the time.
>
> *—Book 2, page 14 (all cites are from the Anniversary Edition)*

Because this wisdom is quietly tucked away in the very opening paragraphs of *Book 2,* it is very often overlooked. Yet this little tidbit has life-changing power in it. From this wisdom emerges a daring and breathtaking insight . . .

Concept #35

God is revealed through the truth about you.

The truth about God is the truth about you. And the truth about you is a truth that you cannot believe: You are Whole, Complete, and Perfect—*just as you are.* There are no improvements that need to be made, no adjustments that have to occur, no alterations that must be achieved. Just be who you are right here, right now, and Divinity shows Itself.

Now the problem is that we don't experience this. And the *reason* we don't experience this is because we have an idea of what Divinity IS, and how Divinity shows Itself, which is totally different from the actuality of Divinity. We think Divinity is perfection—by *our definition.* Yet our definition of "perfection" is not perfection at all, but some fictionalized concoction having nothing to do with Ultimate Reality.

In Ultimate Reality perfection is Everything That Is, Exactly As It Is, in the Now/Always of Eternal Existence. Everything is seen and understood to be part of the Divine Experience of Divinity Itself, becoming what It is Next Going to Be. Life is God, caught in the act of "Godding."

Nothing is condemned, because to condemn anything would be to condemn something that is part of that which Everything Is. And if All That Is is Everything There Is, who or what is left to do the condemning? Would Everything not simply be condemning Itself?

The answer is yes, yet this is precisely what we do when we disapprove of ourselves. We condemn ourselves, calling ourselves insufficient, or not enough, or not *good* enough. Then we hide the parts of ourselves that we have decided (or have allowed someone else to decide) are not good enough. We do not tell the truth about them. We lie about them, conceal them, try to make them go away. Yet only when we stand naked before the world, seen in our completeness and wholeness, can we be truly loved—and can we truly love. For it is in the acceptance of the Whole Self, evolving as It is, that the Self as a Whole (in other words, Others) is experienced.

Exercise

Go out and buy a small notebook and call it your Truth Pad. Write in it a list of truths about yourself that you rarely, if ever, tell yourself. This is the First Level of Truth

Telling. Tell the truth *to* yourself *about* yourself. Write at the top of a page: HERE IS WHAT IS TRUE ABOUT ME. Then put down everything you can think of.

Create a second section of this Truth Pad. Label it HERE IS WHAT IS TRUE ABOUT YOU. Now pick a person in your life who is close to you and write that person's name at the top of the page under the heading. Then, make a list of every thought that you hold about that person that is true for you—whether it is factually true about that person or not. Remember, you are not interested in *the* truth, or *their* truth, you are interested in *your* truth. Just tell the truth to yourself about that Other, as you experience it.

Create a third section of this Truth Pad. Label it WHAT I AM WILLING TO TELL ANOTHER ABOUT ME. Now copy over from the first list anything that feels comfortable for you to share with others. Look to see . . . have you carried over the entire first list? If not, why not? If so, how does that feel? Are you really willing to share this information with another? If so, when? Make a Commitment Statement at the bottom of this second list: "I will share these truths about me with _____on or before _____."

Create a fourth section of this Truth Pad. Label it WHAT I AM WILLING TO TELL ANOTHER ABOUT HIMSELF OR HERSELF. Now copy over from the second list anything that feels comfortable for you to share with that Other. Look to see . . . have you carried over the entire second list? If not, why not? If so, how does that feel? Are you really willing to share this information with that other person who is close to you? If so, when? Make a Commitment Statement at the bottom of this fourth list: "I will share these truths about _____ with that person on or before _____."

Create a fifth section of this Truth Pad. Label it WHAT I AM WILLING TO TELL EVERYONE ABOUT EVERYTHING. Make a list of the untold truths of your life—of the things you never say and have never said, even though they are truthfully how you feel. Make a separate list of things that are "nobody's business," as far as you are concerned (except maybe those who are closest to you). Maybe it's your age. Maybe it's your salary. Maybe it's your political affiliation or your religion, or something about your past. Maybe it's your greatest weakness. Maybe it's your biggest talent, or your fondest hope, or your grandest dream. Ask yourself, "Why is this nobody's business?" "If I am asked about this directly, would I reveal this?" "If not, why not?" "What am I achieving by keeping this hidden?" "What is the purpose of 'privacy,' anyway?"

Did you have any unusual response to this exercise? What did you feel as you were answering the questions? Did your answers tell you anything about yourself? Can you share this with your study group? If you are using this book individually, make an entry in your journal.

Further Discussion:
The scariest part of all

The scariest part of life is having everything about us *totally known.* The reason this is scary is that we are afraid someone will not have a positive response to the total truth about us. The reason we are afraid that someone will not have a positive response to the total truth about us is that WE have failed to have a positive response about the total truth about us.

People cannot respond to us in any way except the way in which we respond to ourselves.

That is the single most important thing I could ever say to those who are seeking to alter the way people seem to be reacting to them.

Do you like yourself? Ask yourself this. *How much do I like myself? How much "work" on myself do I have to do before I can really like the way I am, completely?* Consider the possibility, remote as it may seem to you, that God loves you just the way you are right now, just the way you have always been, and just the way you will ever be!

To pause and reflect

Assignment

Answer the questions below sometime during the next week. Come back next week prepared to discuss your answers. If you are not in a study group, in about two weeks revisit the

answers you have placed in your journal. Look to see how you feel about them then. Then, in lieu of discussion with other class members, have a "discussion with yourself" about which answer, if any, you wish had been different, and which, if any, you would now like to change.

Did you do anything right today?

Did you put on shoes today? Were you at least that tender with yourself?

Did you hang your bath towel up after showering this morning?

Make a list of the ways in which you have been "good" today and "good to yourself" *today. What does this list reveal to you about how you feel about yourself?*

If there was a way to improve how you feel about yourself, what would that be?

Is it possible that one fast way to feel better about yourself and to forgive yourself for anything is to feel better about another and to forgive another for doing or being the same thing?

What does your answer to the last question tell you about how you now want to be with yourself and with others?

CHAPTER 16

DISCOVERING THE WILL OF GOD

There is a reason why you can only be defined as perfect, just the way you are right here, right now. That reason is startlingly elegant, simple, and straightforward: you are perfect because it is impossible for you to be or do anything that is against the Will of God.

This is not something that is discussed by any of the world's major religions. Indeed, those religions tell you exactly the opposite. They tell you that you *have* been and done things that are against the Will of God—and that this has been going on since your first moment on Earth. Indeed, some religions tell you that you have been imperfect since *before* birth, that you were "born in Original Sin."

Yet the truth is—the totally, utterly remarkable truth is—you cannot violate God's will if you tried, because your will is God's Will. This is very difficult for most people to believe. Yet it is a basic tenet of The New Spirituality.

> Your will is My Will. First, because I know it. Second, because I accept it. Third, because I praise it. Fourth, because I love it. Fifth, because I own

it, and call it My Own. This means you have free will to do as you wish—and that I make your will Mine, through unconditional love.

Now for My Will to be yours, you would have to do the same.

First, you would have to know it. Second, you would have to accept it. Third, you would have to praise it. Fourth, you would have to love it. Finally, you would have to call it your own.

In the whole history of your race, only a few of you have ever done this consistently. A handful of others have done it nearly always. A larger number have done it a great deal. A whole slew of people have done it from time to time. And virtually everyone has done it on rare occasion—though some have never done it at all.

—Book 2, page 16

This passage must be considered deeply. It is telling us that our will is always God's Will—but that God's Will is not always ours. At first, this seems to speak of a God who is separate from us. Only upon deep, meditative reflection do we come to the higher truth: God is bigger than us. We are the singularization of The Singularity. God is The Singularity Itself. God is the Sum Total of all the "we's" that there are. Not only all the "we's," but also all the "whats." There is only One Thing, and All Things are part of the One That That Is.

This means that we are God—but God is not us.

Here, then, is a perfect example of the Divine Dichotomy, a phenomenon spoken of often in the Conversations with God dialogues. A dichotomy is when two truths, apparently contradictory, exist simultaneously in the same space.

To unravel this dichotomy, let's reduce the size of the consideration. Let's use, instead of the example of You and God, the example of a Wave and the Ocean. One could say of the Wave as its hits the shore, "That is the Ocean." But one could not say of the Ocean, "That is a Wave." For it is much more. So the Wave is the Ocean, yet the Ocean is not the Wave and cannot be fully described or defined by a single wave—any more than God can be fully described or defined by you. God is much more vast.

Hence, your will is God's Will (the action of the Wave upon the shore is the action of the Ocean), yet God's Will is not your will (the action of the Ocean is not seen or collected or limited to one Wave).

Concept #36

It is impossible for humans to violate the Will of God.

Here is a spiritually revolutionary statement—one of many such head-turning, mind-bending declarations in *Conversations with God.* More than an abstraction or intellectualization, it is an insight into the basic nature of the Universe, revealing the prime characteristic of Ultimate Reality.

It changes everything in the way we hold God in our experience—and in the way we consider ourselves in relationship to our God. Are we sinners? Are we saints? Are we something in between? Does anybody even care? Is anyone even keeping track of all this?

Exercise

Think of the times in your life when you considered yourself to have committed a violation of the Will of God. Perhaps there are three or four such moments in your life. Perhaps there were three or four such moments just last week! Perhaps, in your lifetime, there are many more. On the other hand, perhaps there are none.

Now take out a piece of paper and divide it into three columns. Make a private list of such moments or incidents in column 1. In the second column, make a short notation of why this was against the Will of God. In the third column, write down what you think the Will of God was in that moment.

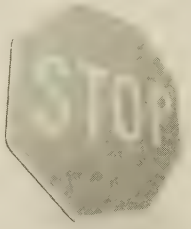
Further Discussion:

Looking at what God wants

Most of our lives we have been told by someone else what God wants. This has led many people to simply discontinue their belief in God, because what they were told that God wanted seemed arbitrary, spurious, and unreasonable. Others have continued their belief in God, but have reconstructed that belief to accommodate a larger, more tolerant, and less "needy" view of Deity.

A remarkable discussion of all of this appears in the CwG book *What God Wants,* a book that is highly recommended for anyone wishing to more fully explore what many

consider to be life's important topic. This text offers a pathway to what I have called A New God (www.ANewGod.com). This New God is not "another" God, but *the same God we have always had,* albeit newly and more fully understood.



To pause and reflect

Assignment

Answer the questions below sometime during the next week. Come back next week prepared to discuss your answers. If you are not in a study group, in about two weeks revisit the answers you have placed in your journal. Look to see how you feel about them then. Then, in lieu of discussion with other class members, have a "discussion with yourself" about which answer, if any, you wish had been different—and which, if any, you would now like to change.

If your will is God's will, does that mean that you can "do no wrong"?

What would happen if the whole world started to believe that we cannot violate the Will of God, no matter what we do? Would this result in "spiritual anarchy"? If so, what would or could that look like?

If we actually can and do violate the Will of God, what is the result of that? Is there a "punishment" for it? What would that punishment be?

Does "Hell" exist? If so, what do you suppose that is? Is it a " forever and ever" experience? Is there no way out?

What about Purgatory? Is there such a place? If so, why does it exist? Who goes there?

If there are certain things that God wants, what is the best way for us to find out what that is? Do we have to guess? Is there a way of knowing for sure?

What does your answer to the last question tell you?

CHAPTER 17

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Now that you know that your will is God's Will, all that's left to do is for you to decide what it is that you choose to experience in your life. Yet many people have done that, and not everyone has experienced what they have chosen. The human mind thus begs to know, Why not? What has happened here?

If The New Spirituality really has it right, if we truly are Individuated Aspects of the Divine, why can we not call forth any outcome, result, or experience that we desire, when we desire it?

The answer is that we can . . . but we have to stop changing our mind about it.

Most people are not aware of how often they change their mind—or what makes them change it. And the problem is (and this is also something that most people do not understand) that the Process of Personal Creation goes on all the time, in every single moment. So, with us changing our mind as fast as thoughts fly through our head, it is no wonder that our outcomes are tenuous at best.

Remember, life is an ongoing process of creation. You are creating your reality every minute. The decision you make today is often not the

> choice you make tomorrow. Yet here is a secret of all Masters: keep choosing the same thing . . . over and over until your will is made manifest in your reality.
>
> For some that could take years. For some, months. For others, weeks. For those approaching mastery, days, hours, or even minutes. For Masters, creation is instantaneous.
>
> You can tell you are on your way to mastery when you see the gap closing between Willing and Experiencing.
>
> *—Book 2, page 21*

We even change our mind about the most important matter of all—the matter of our personal identity, the question of Who We Really Are. We keep bouncing back and forth between *I am an Aspect of Divinity* and *I am only human.* We can't seem to settle in one place or the other or to find a balance between both. (That, of course, would be the ideal situation—to be "in this world, but not of it.")

We are all Individuations of Divinity. *CwG* makes this very clear. Each of us is a Wave in the Ocean that is God. Many people are now beginning to believe this—until they don't. It is a belief that they drop as soon as the slightest evidence appears that seems to contradict it. Most of us do not put our belief to the test very strenuously. Most of us abandon it pretty quickly. ("And I tell you, before the cock crows three times you will deny me.")

As we seek to manifest our reality we fail to take into account the *entire* Process of Personal Creation as beautifully detailed in *Happier Than God,* a wonderful book that has been called the hands-on "Tool Kit" of the Conversations with God dialogues. This text gives us practical devices, strategies, and approaches with which we can apply *CwG*'s freedom-giving, soul-releasing messages to our daily lives.

Those messages include . . .

Concept #37

God does not "give" you anything. You call it forth.

Many people are trying to find a way to get God to give them what they want: healing for a loved one, a better job, the perfect life mate, abundance, and so on. So they

pray to God, or they try to use what they call the Law of Attraction, or they beg and plead with the Universe.

God, however, does not give anything to us. *We take it.* Quite literally, we take what we want right off the Stock Shelf of the Universe. And we are *invited to.* We are actually *encouraged* to just walk into the Cosmic Warehouse and take what we want.

How?

By using magnets.

We literally "attract" things to us by thinking in particular ways, talking in particular ways, and acting in particular ways. This is the Process of Personal Creation that is described in extraordinary detail in *Happier Than God.* But there is more to it than just thinking positively. Much more. Not the least of which is Concept 5 as discussed in this very book—the Law of Opposites. Now would be an excellent time to go back and read that section.

I asked God in my dialogue, Why does it take so much time for me to create the reality I choose? The answer?

> For a number of reasons. Because you do not believe you can have what you choose. Because you do not know what to choose. Because you keep trying to figure out what's "best" for you. Because you want guarantees ahead of time that all your choices will be "good." And because you keep changing your mind!
>
> *—Book 2, page 24*

Exercise

Make a list of Three Things I Choose to Experience in My Life.

Now, next to each item on the list, write down the date on which you first thought of that as a goal. If you can't remember the date, just put the approximate time in your life when you decided that you wished to experience that.

Now, write down today's date next to that.

Now look to see how much time has passed since you first made the declaration that this was something you choose to experience. And remember, there's no "right" or "wrong" about this, it's just an exercise.

Now, make a list of Three Things I Can Remember Choosing Earlier in My Life. Just back up in your memory and see if you can remember at least three things that you once wanted very badly in your life.

Now next to those items, write down the date or time in your life when you actually manifested that reality. Or, if you never did, write down the date or time that you can remember letting go of that dream.

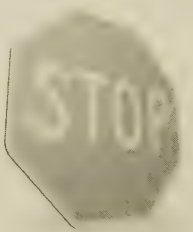
In a third column, make a short note of why you think that dream has not yet come true.

Date this exercise and make a note on your personal calendar to take out this paper or notebook and look at it again in three months, in six months, and in a year.

Further Discussion:
Stopping the starting

People slow down or stop the Process of Personal Creation for all the reasons given in the text reference above. It's either about lack of belief, confusion, wanting guarantees, or changing their mind. Many people can't seem to get their lives started on the path of their desires because they keep "stopping the starting" in this way.

Now that we see what the problem is, we can begin to eliminate these typical blockages to calling forth the experiences we desire.



To pause and reflect

Assignment

Answer the questions below sometime during the next week. Come back next week prepared to discuss your answers. If you are not in a study group, in about two weeks revisit the answers you have placed in your journal. Look to see how you feel about them then. Then, in lieu of discussion with other class members, have a "discussion with yourself" about which answer, if any, you wish had been different—and which, if any, you would now like to change.

Do you believe that you are an Individuation of the Divine?

If so, what does that mean to you? What are the characteristics of the Divine that you see in yourself and wish to experience more of?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your life right now? Do not intellectualize this question or try to analyze how to best answer it. Just give yourself a number from 1 to 10 in terms of the quality of your life right now and the present level of your happiness.

Do you think it is possible to raise this number? Even if you gave yourself a 10, do you think it is possible to have a life that's even better?

Why would you seek this? How would you do it?

What is the purpose of your doing it? What is the purpose of your life altogether?

Can you think about any purpose or desire for your life about which you do not think you will ever change your mind? If so, what would that be?

CHAPTER 18

EVEN THIS WILL PASS AWAY

Now that you have understood the blockages to creating your life the way you want it, it is time to look at why you want it that way. What are you chasing after? A terrific and fulfilling job? The perfect mate? Good health? Emotional stability? Financial abundance? Joy, peace, and happiness?

If so, why are you after these things? What is the *purpose* of them? What is the *point?*

Is there something larger going on here in this, your life? Might it have something to do with *your soul's* agenda?

Most people say that they perfectly well understand that life is not about "who winds up with the most toys," or who ends up with the power or the influence or all the material signs and measures of "success." Yet what, then, *is* life about? What is its purpose? What is its meaning?

The soul, we say, has come to physicality to express itself and to experience itself as Who It Really Is . . . which is, That Which Is Divine. We have come here, *CwG* tells us, to express and to experience Divinity . . . and to re-create ourselves anew in the next grandest version of the greatest vision ever we held about what it means to be That.

This, we say, is The Path. We are, in this sense, on a path back to God. Or, if you please, Self-Realization. In the strictest sense it is not about *returning* to God, but about realizing that we have never *left;* that God is always with us, and that our invitation and our opportunity is to once more experience that sense of Communion with God.

Yes, we say, this is something that we know. Yet knowing it does not seem to bring many of us closer to the experience. That is because, in my case at least, I do not want to have to *take* the path in order to be *on* the path!

> You say you understand the meaning of life, but you do not live your understandings. You say you know the way toward Communion with God, but you do not take that way. You claim you are on The Path, but you do not walk it.
>
> *—Book 2, page 35*

Most people are not interested in doing what they have to do, being what they have to be, and having what they have to have in order to take The Path. It's all just too hard. It's too arduous a journey. "Let me just live my life and have a good time! Why do things have to be so difficult? Why all this challenge? I just want to have fun, live a satisfying life, and go back to Heaven! Gee, is that so much to ask?"

I know I'm not speaking for you here. This is just how the human mind sometimes works. Yet *Book 2* in the Conversations with God trilogy makes it very clear that . . .

Concept #38

To be on the path you must take the path.

Taking the spiritual path is challenging. I do not want to speak lightly about this, nor, with the simple power of words, to cause you to feel that there is "nothing to it." It can be the most difficult thing you will ever do in your life. Because it requires clear Intention. Absolute Commitment. Deep Determination. A refusal to accept anything less than Total Involvement in Every Moment.

It is about Mindfulness, which means being *fully present* from minute to minute, allowing you to move into *acute awareness* of every thought, word, and deed that pro-

ceeds from you, of every emotion that builds within you, and to Stand in Your Truth about Who You Are and come from *pure choice* in the demonstration of that.

You do this by stopping and just breathing as you catch yourself in a string of thoughts, or a flow of words, or a trail of actions. You do this by examining each thought *as you are thinking it,* and asking yourself, Is this what I choose to think? You do this by listening to each word *as you are speaking it,* and asking yourself, Is this what I choose to say? You do this by watching each action *as you are taking it,* and asking yourself, Is this what I choose to do? Then you ask yourself, *Why?* Why do I choose to think, say, and do these things? What am I creating here? What am I experiencing? Then you measure that against your idea of Divinity.

Arduous as this may sound, it is also the most joyous experience you will ever have. It is the reason you are here, walking on the Earth. It is the Soul's highest happiness, and its very *reason for being.* And once you have stepped onto The Path, once you have committed to taking this Journey, the walking becomes dancing and the wonder of expressing love in every moment replaces any momentary or transitory "upper" that any other aspect of your physical life could possibly hope to bring you. Yet it *enhances* those physical pleasures beyond belief, turning ordinary life into an extraordinary experience.

Exercise

Move into the next moments of this day with a conscious intention to use your physical life, and every incoming event in it, as a invitation from God to express Divinity from within you, demonstrating to the world What It Is and Who You Are.

Move into Mindfulness in this very moment. Right Now.

Become aware of your breathing.

Now listen to the sounds around you. Stop reading and just listen.

Now move into sweet awareness of the contextual field being created for you by you in the next thirty seconds. Just close your eyes and notice What Is True Right Here, Right Now. Don't add anything to it, don't take anything from it. Just be Aware of What Is So Right Here, Right Now. Stop reading and do that.

Now decide what you choose to be True For YOU in the next five minutes of your life. Don't try to go out any farther than that. Satisfy yourself with doing this for five minutes. Put the book down and do something else in your life right now. Go get some

coffee. Or tea. Make a piece of toast. Or grab a banana. DO something in the physical world with your physicality. But do it with Intention to put into your physical environment a statement, a demonstration, to the world of What It Is and Who You Are. After five minutes, return to this book.

Further Discussion:
One step at a time

That was good. Learn to take the demonstration of Divinity one step at a time. Do not try this for an entire day. You will wear yourself out within the first hour. Then you will become discouraged. Then you will not want to do this anymore. Just take Divinity one step at a time.

Teach yourself to use *life itself* as a Contextual Field within which you are invited by *life itself* to produce this outpouring of the Truth about yourself. Allow yourself to increase your Awareness incrementally. Remember, the purpose of Awareness is to put yourself fully, absolutely, and completely into This Moment and This Place—to be Here and Now totally. And why? Because pulling yourself into Here and Now pulls you *out of* Then and There.

You see, Then and There exist only in your mind. An experience of yourself is not available in your past nor in your future. So thoughts about yesterday or tomorrow will not and cannot create it for you. Only the Here and Now can produce for you an experience of your True Self . . . because it is only in the Here and Now that you can *make decisions and choices that affect the experience you are having.*

Thus, it is only Right Here, Right Now in which you can re-create yourself anew in the next grandest version of the greatest vision you ever held about Who You Are. And doing *that* is the only reason you came here.

Yet how can we do this? Where do we begin? A breathtaking answer to that question comprises the entirety of chapter 13 of *Book 2.* It could be the most important chapter of any book you have ever read in your life.

To pause and reflect

Assignment

Turn to chapter 13 of Book 2 *and read it twice—once to yourself and once aloud. Let your ears hear the sound of the words and your heart feel their gentle power.*

Take in the message here. Take it in deeply. Don't let your mind skim over the surface of these words. Decide that what you are reading is God, speaking directly to you.

Carry a small spiral-bound pocket notebook with you wherever you go this week. Make an entry in the notebook every time you notice yourself acting or thinking in ways that do not reflect the invitation that is Book 2, *chapter 13. Do not judge yourself around this, or make yourself "wrong." Simply notice it. And write down in a short commentary what it was that threw you back into your imagining about your Self. Remember, anything less than Divinity is your imagination. Your Divinity is your realization. Every moment you get to choose between Imagination and Realization. The choice is yours.*

At the end of the week, look to see how many moments, and what kinds of events, caused you to abandon your True Self. ("Before the cock crows three times, you will deny Me.")

Count the number of times and make that your weekly score. Next week, seek to lower that number. Like a cosmic game of golf, see how low you can bring your score.

CHAPTER 19

CREATING DIVINITY

The process of creating and experiencing Divinity that has been touched on in the previous chapter leads us into a deep discussion of human sexuality—for a number of reasons.

One reason is that so many people think there is a separation between the two. That is, they believe that sexuality and spirituality don't mix. At least, not *rampant* sexuality. Not *unbridled* sexuality. Maybe nice, quiet, don't-get-all-crazy-now sexuality, yes. Maybe don't-let-the-kids-hear-you sexuality, yes. But not playful, lustful, *no-holds-barred* sexuality! *That* is nothing more than "giving in to your base desires," and has nothing to do with spirituality or *God.*

So some people feel they have to abandon sexual fantasies if they want to manifest spiritual realities. They think that if they wish their most joyous spiritual selves to be real, they have to release their most joyous sexual selves to the unreal. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. *Conversations with God, Book 2* explores the question of human sexuality fully. "How may we best express this thing called sexual energy?" it asks, and then provides us with this answer: "Lovingly. Openly. Playfully. Joyfully.

Outrageously. Passionately. Sacredly. Romantically. Humorously. Spontaneously. Touchingly. Creatively. Unabashedly. Sensually. And, of course, Frequently."

As *Book 1* tells us, sex is not what we think it is. It is more—so much more—than an act of physical bodies. It is an exchange of *energy* in a way that is synergistic. This Synergistic Energy eXchange is the mechanism of life itself. It creates what *Book 2* calls The Body Between Us.

> All the World is exchanging energy all the time. Your energy is pushing out, touching everything else. Everything and everyone else is touching you. But now an interesting thing happens. At some point midway between you and everything else—those energies meet.
>
> *—Book 2, page 101*

Conversations with God contains the most beautiful description of human sexuality I have ever heard. I urge everyone reading this companion to open *Book 2* to chapter 7 and read it in its entirety . . . at least once a month. It is that important, it is that impactful. And it contains an extraordinary message, summed up here in . . .

Concept #39

Sexual energy and spiritual energy are one and the same.

Human sexuality is the miniaturization of the great energy exchange of life itself at every level. It packs into one intense experience the impulse of life, which is to Unify with Itself. From this miniaturized experience of the Macrocosm, *new life emerges*—for that is the purpose of the unification itself. Not only new physical life (which occurs *sometimes*), but new emotional life and new spiritual life (which occurs *always*). For a loving exchange of life energy in the form of sexual expression causes one to be "born again" in the spirit.

And there is no form of human sexual expression (except—as with all human behaviors—that which damages or degrades another) that is not the highest demonstration of Divinity.

Do you believe this?

Exercise

Find and read, thoroughly, a book of sexual instruction, such as *The Joy of Sex.* Make sure the book has lots of pictures, so that you can easily see how these celebrations are physicalized.

Look to see if you experience any embarrassment about reading such a book. Read it with your romantic partner, if that is possible, and keep a notebook of ideas you would like to explore.

Also, with your partner, read about the creation of TOMARY in chapter 7 of *CwG, Book 2.* Then agree with your partner on a day and time when you can co-create this experience. Make it a "date." A date with a very special purpose: the experiencing of your Divinity through the expression of your sexuality.

Further Discussion:
Escaping your comfort zone

Life begins at the end of your Comfort Zone. This is true in all areas of your life—and it is never more apparent than in the expression of your sexuality. A full, rich expression of this aspect of being human is challenging for many people, usually because of the False Ideas that people have picked up about sex from their childhood environment, as well as those that they continue to receive from humanity's present-day cultural story.

The invitation that *Conversations with God* extends to us is to step *outside* of our Comfort Zone around both sexuality and spirituality, embracing new and exciting ideas about being human and being divine.

To pause and reflect

Experiment

The next time you are about to engage in a sexual experience ask yourself, "What would God do now?" Watch whether this enhances your sexual expression or throws cold water on it.

CHAPTER 20

EDUCATING OUR YOUNG

If *Book 2* is known for anything, it is best remembered by many readers for its pointed social commentary. Not only is sexuality explored expansively, but education, politics, and many other areas of life on-the-ground as well.

The observations on education in the book's ninth chapter are among the most remarked-upon passages. Here, God tells us that we would benefit enormously from a complete overhaul of our education system, shifting our emphasis from the teaching of facts to the teaching of concepts; from the transferring of knowledge to the development of wisdom; from the demand for correct answers to an encouragement of piercing questions.

The child who is given only knowledge can often supply correct answers on a test asking for facts and figures, but may not do well in social interactions or be able to make effective judgments about courses of action in life outside the classroom. On the other hand, the child who is not trained merely to provide answers, but is also imbued with the excitement of asking questions, will be equipped to respond to the questions of life itself that pop up on a day-to-day basis. It is as Einstein said: "Imagination is more important than knowledge. The important thing is to not stop questioning."

We should not be asking our children to simply memorize facts about yesterday in order to construct a course of action for today. We should be challenging them to base their present choices on critical thinking that can only come from years of being encouraged to respectfully challenge every teacher and question every lesson.

> Past Data should not be the basis of Present Truth. Data from a prior time or experience should always and only be the basis for new questions. Always the treasure should be in the question, not in the answer.
>
> *—Book 2, page 157*

Knowledge is that which is given to us by others. Wisdom is that which is called forth from within. Knowledge is often forgotten. Wisdom seldom is. *Book 2* strongly encourages the development of a whole new curriculum, focused on concepts in living rather than facts about the past and on the development of abilities and skills rather than memories.

This does not suggest by any means that the acquisition of facts has no value, but that perhaps facts should be used as the basis for developing conceptual thinking, rather than as the primary focus of the education process. As *CwG* puts it, "In order to protect your way of life, you have built an education system based upon the development in the child of memories, not abilities. Children are taught to *remember* facts and fictions—the fictions each society has set up about itself—rather than given the ability to discover and create their own truths."

These approaches are in some quarters soundly ridiculed by those who imagine that they know what a child needs to learn. Yet what we have been teaching our children has led our world *away from* wisdom, not toward it. And so, *Book 2* invites us to carefully consider . . .

Concept #40

Wisdom is knowledge applied.

Conversations with God says that the key to re-creating ourselves anew on this planet is education—and not only a shift in the *way* we teach our children, but in *what* we

teach them. Not just a shift in emphasis from facts to concepts, but an alteration of the concepts . . . and even some of what we have called "the facts" of life.

It invites us to write a whole new cultural story about ourselves, about life, and about God—and to begin telling that new story to our children. A cultural story that does not tell of a species of beings who are separate from each other and from God, but who are One with each other and with the Divine.

The intent is to bring an end to the Separation Theology (the idea that God is "over there" and we are "over here") that has produced a Separation Cosmology (a way of holding all of life as a system of separate units or elements interacting with, but not connected to, each other) that has produced a Separation Psychology (a way of viewing the soul as isolated from all souls and from everything else) that has produced a Separation Sociology (a way of interacting with others that exacerbates, rather than eliminates, our isolation) that has produced a Separation Pathology (a way of behaving as a group called Humanity that actually promotes self-destruction rather than self-preservation).

Then the intent is to base the rest of the curriculum on this foundation, focusing on the values and concepts that undergird such a vision of non-separation and teach them in our schools. As *Book 2* says, why not courses such as:

Understanding Power

Peaceful Conflict Resolution

Elements of Loving Relationships

Personhood and Self-Creation

Body, Mind, and Spirit: How They Function

Engaging Creativity

Celebrating Self, Valuing Others

Joyous Sexual Expression

Fairness

Tolerance

Diversities and Similarities

Ethical Economics

Creative Consciousness and Mind Power

Awareness and Wakefulness

Honesty and Responsibility

Visibility and Transparency

Science and Spirituality

Reading, writing, and arithmetic would be taught, too, of course, but through these courses, not *instead* of them.

Exercise

In a roundtable discussion in your study group, or in your journal, answer the following questions . . .

1. Is it possible that our local school might add some of these topics to its course of study for our children?
2. If not, can we find a small group of parents who would be willing to offer a Home Schooling session one or two days a week after school to introduce these subjects to our children?
3. Can the School of the New Spirituality help? Can we set up a parents' committee to get something started through them? (www.SchoolOfTheNewSpirituality.com)

The School of the New Spirituality has created an Elder School Program, an outreach to senior citizens who are excited about spending a few hours each week sharing the ideas in this curriculum with children.

The School of the New Spirituality also has a Home Schooling program that can send out teaching kits—roughly, a "school in a box"—that provide wonderful learning aids for children.

And, of course, there is children's spiritual literature out there, including *The Little Soul and the Sun* and *The Little Soul and the Earth,* both of them very special books for young people, derived from the messages in *Conversations with God.*

Exercise

Below is a list of life concepts that *CwG* recommends our schools teach children. For a contrast to what is now being done, complete the form below.

LIFE SKILLS & CONCEPTS	What is taught in my child's school about this	What a CwG school would teach about this
Understanding Power		
Peaceful Conflict Resolution		
Tolerance		
Fairness		
Joyous Sexual Expression		
Creative Consciousness and Mind Power		
Celebrating Self, Valuing Others		
Loving Relationships		

LIFE SKILLS & CONCEPTS	What is taught in my child's school about this	What a CwG school would teach about this
Diversities and Similarities		
Honesty and Responsibility		
Visibility and Transparency		
Science and Spirituality		
Body, Mind, and Spirit Functions		
Awareness and Wakefulness		
Ethical Economics		

Further Discussion:
Do we value values?

We hear a lot these days about family values, and many of the proponents of family values say that values should be taught in the home; that schools have no place in the process of values education. This is because, they say, values differ from family to family and public schools have no basis on which to decide which values will be taught in the classroom.

Do we teach Christian values? Muslim values? Jewish values? Secular values? Yet the lack of values education in our schools is what has caused us to turn out so many fundamentally radical young people in the past twenty-five years. It is the *de-value-ization* of our schools that has brought them to a place of sterile ineffectiveness.

If a culture is not to use education to inspire and ignite the creation of internal values in its offspring, what *can* it use?

The recommendation in *Conversations with God, Book 2* is not that a *particular* set of values be taught under headings such as those above, but that *concepts* and *life skills* be explored, with all points of view brought to the discussion and with the children themselves making the final decision as to how they want to live and be, based on what makes sense and what feels appropriate and natural to them.

To pause and reflect

Assignment

Please answer the following questions:

What are the values that you believe are missing in life today on the planet Earth?
What are the values that you believe are apparent?
What do you see as the cause of those behaviors?
In what ways do you feel human behaviors might most beneficially be changed, and what do you think would change them?

Come prepared to discuss your answers with your study group next week, or write down your answers to these questions in your journal and return to your journal in a week to review your answers, adding to them if new thoughts and ideas have arisen.

CHAPTER 21

A CRISIS OF CARING

Our world is facing a crisis of consciousness. We must decide whether we simply care for each other.

This is the candid assessment of *Book 2* on the state of the world today. And the dialogue is equally candid about the reason for this circumstance: Separation Cosmology.

There is no question that the idea that we are separate from God, from life, and from each other has created endless difficulties on this planet—difficulties that we could have avoided had we embraced a different point of view about our identity.

In *Home with God in a Life That Never Ends* we are told that most people on the Earth are living a case of mistaken identity. That is, they do not know Who They Really Are. They are also unclear as to where they are, why they are where they are, and what they are doing there.

In many ways the human race is like a person walking around with one shoe nailed to the floor. We are walking in a circle, getting nowhere.

A reading of *Book 2* in the Conversations with God trilogy makes this very clear. In pointing to the challenges and problems now being confronted by our species, it notes that these challenges and problems have scarcely changed in thousands of years.

As you know, the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, expecting to get a different result. The human race is acting insanely, and it is insisting that its choices are perfectly rational.

Our job is to convince people of the insanity of their actions. It is not going to be easy—and it is also not impossible. This *CwG Companion* that you are holding in your hand can be an extraordinarily useful tool. It allows people to move through all of the major concepts in the CwG trilogy one at a time, exploring each one deeply and using exercises to help integrate them into daily behavior.

The first of these concepts—and, no doubt, the single most impacting—is the first spiritual principle laid down in the first few words of the first chapter of the first book in the CwG nine-book series. In other words, it's right there up front.

The statement: WE ARE ALL ONE.

Unless and until we humans understand, embrace, and employ that truth as we live our lives, we will not have peace on earth, goodwill to all. We will not end suffering, we will not end exploitation, we will not end oppression, and we will not end humanity's inhumanity to man.

> The underprivileged everywhere must grovel and scrimp to merely stay alive, while the few in power protect and increase great hoards of cash, lie on sheets of silk, and each morning twist bathroom fixtures made of gold.
>
> And as emaciated children of ribs and skin die in the arms of weeping mothers, their country's leaders engage in political corruptions which keep donated food stuffs from reaching the starving masses.
>
> No one seems to have the power to alter these conditions, yet the truth is, power is not the problem. No one seems to have the will.
>
> And thus it will always be, so long as no one sees another's plight as his own.
>
> *—Book 2, page 168*

As we noted in the previous chapter of this *CwG Companion,* the answer here is education. We *must* begin to see another's plight as our own or no other will see our plight as *theirs,* and we will forever be at odds, confirming with our actions our sponsoring thought of Separation and Isolation.

Our challenge during this day and time is both educational and political, however. For it will take in-the-moment political leadership to create future-moment practical outcomes that produce both a new approach to education and a new cultural story about which we seek to educate.

The political challenge is a challenge of will—as *Book 2* points out. We must be willing to change our ideas about ourselves. We must be willing to alter our entire concept of what it means to be human. We must be willing to consider thoughts about ourselves and about our God that were thought to be blasphemous just a short while ago. We must be willing to embrace . . .

Concept #41

It is possible that there is something we do not know about God and about Life . . . the knowing of which would change everything.

This is a tall order. Human beings do not like to acknowledge their own weaknesses, and are certainly loathe to admit that there is anything that's really important about such old and well-worn topics as God or life that they just don't understand.

Exercise

Let's test your present understanding of God and Life. Each of the following boxes contains an opening statement, waiting for you to complete it.

As you contemplate each statement, go back in your memory to the earliest piece of information that you can remember having been given on this topic. Who was it that gave you this data? How much did you trust them to know what is so and to tell you what is true? How did this affect your later thinking about this topic? Now please jump to your present-moment reality around this and complete the statement.

THERE IS A GOD, AND THIS GOD CAN BEST BE DEFINED AS . . .

GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, AND
GOD'S REASON FOR DOING SO IS . . .

THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS THAT
GOD REQUIRES OF HUMAN BEINGS IN ORDER TO REMAIN IN GOD'S
GOOD GRACES. HERE IS A LIST OF WHAT GOD WANTS:

WHEN YOU DIE GOD WILL . . .

THE BEST WAY TO GET GOD'S HELP DURING YOUR LIFE ON EARTH IS TO . . .

LIFE IS A PROCESS THAT MIGHT BE DESCRIBED AS ENERGY MOVING.
YOUR ROLE IN THE MOVEMENT OF THAT ENERGY IS . . .

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE, GENERICALLY, IS . . .

THE PURPOSE OF YOUR INDIVIDUAL LIFE IS . . .

Further Discussion:
What we don't know

Conversations with God tells us that what we don't know about God and about life is that *God and we are One* (see chapter 13 of this *CwG Companion*). There is no separation between us—nor between any living thing. And, *all things are living.* Therefore, separation does not exist as a condition of the Universe.

It does exist, however, in our own imagination. And it has become a part of our cosmology, of our cultural story—the story that we tell ourselves about ourselves and that we tell our children about life on Earth.

The idea of separation has become fixed in our consciousness not solely because of, but surely as a partial result of, the insistence of our religions from their earliest days on declaring that Divinity exists outside of humanity and that the two have been separated since the Fall of Adam (as certain theologies have it).

Our greatest challenge as we move more deeply into the twenty-first century, *CwG* says, is to "put an end to Separation Theology." If we ever did that, the first domino would fall, and the rest would follow. Our Separation Cosmology, our Separation Psychology, our Separation Sociology, and, most important of all, our Separation Pathology would disappear.

Yet putting an end to Separation Theology is difficult for many people because of the extraordinary benefits of declaring that we are separate from God. A few of those benefits are listed below . . .

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Do you notice anything strange about this list? Yes, indeed. *Nothing is listed.* That's because there *are* no benefits. Not a single one.

To pause and reflect

Experiment

For the first three days of this week move through your hour-to-hour experience as if you thought that there was no separation whatsoever between you and God.

See what this does to your attitude, your thoughts, and your actions. Make a note of your experience in a small daily diary or notebook.

On the fourth day, switch to a new idea. Mark your calendar to remind you. On Day 4, move through each moment as if you thought that there was no separation whatsoever between you and another person.

See what impact this has, if any, on your interactions with people in your home, in your workplace, and in your community.

Also, notice how many hours or minutes you found it possible to maintain these creative thoughts about yourself. Were you able to do so all day? If not, what changed in your outer experience to cause you to change your idea about yourself?

Enter these observations in your daily diary.

Come prepared to discuss this with your study group next week, or make an entry in your journal regarding this.

CHAPTER 22

TRANSPARENCY AS A LIFESTYLE

Of the many striking recommendations in *CwG, Book 2* for major changes in the way human beings are presently constructing their collective reality—from alterations in our expression of sexuality to new approaches in the educating of our offspring to the writing of an entirely different cultural story (one of unity rather than separation)—the single most controversial idea, the one that brings up the most lively discussions in lectures, interviews, and workshops, is concept of Total Visibility.

Conversations with God calls for absolute transparency in the living of one's life, with no secrets withheld from anyone about anything.

This is the final major concept offered in the second book of the trilogy. There, midway through chapter 16, the idea of *visibility* is explored. Add this to the concept of *nonseparation* and you have the CwG Double-Helix: an intertwining spiral pathway to transformation that, not unlike the DNA of our very being, has a major groove (unity) and a minor groove (visibility).

> Most, if not all, of the world's problems and conflicts, and of your problems and conflicts as individuals, would be solved and resolved if you would, as a society:
>
> 1. Abandon the concept of Separation.
> 2. Adopt the concept of Visibility.
>
> Never see yourself again as separate from one another, and never see yourself as separate from Me. Never tell anything but the whole truth to anyone, and never again accept anything less than your grandest truth about Me.
>
> The first choice will produce the second, for when you see and understand that you are One with Everyone, you can not tell an untruth or withhold important data or be anything but totally visible with all others because you will be clear that it is in your own best interests to do so.
>
> But this paradigm shift will take great wisdom, great courage, and massive determination. For Fear will strike at the heart of these concepts and call them false. Fear will eat at the core of these magnificent truths and make them appear hollow. Fear will distort, disdain, destroy. And so Fear will be your greatest enemy.
>
> *—Book 2, page 283*

The dialogue here makes it very clear as to what stops people from following this two-lane pathway to enlightenment. We are all simply too afraid. (Unless we are not.)

The fear behind non-separation is, of course, that in melding into Oneness we will lose our individuality, and with it our very identity as something Other than The All. Individuality is the only thing that renders us able to know ourselves as distinct from the rest of life. Loss of individuality equates in our minds to loss of the Self's ability to recognize itself, which, in turn, equates to the loss of the Self *itself.* That could only be described as the Ultimate Loss.

The fear behind visibility is that when we are totally seen we will be rejected. The fear of rejection stems from our base belief in a Rejecting God. Our thought system around this is clear: when, on "Judgment Day," we are seen by God in total visibility, God may (and probably will, given our behaviors) condemn us to everlasting damnation. This, of course, would be the Ultimate Rejection.

Tough territory to negotiate. Yet if we can let go of the idea of God's condemnation, we won't be afraid of being completely seen—either after death or before it.

> Perhaps when you lose the fear of having your life become totally visible at the moment of your death, you can get over the fear of having your life become totally visible while you are living it.
>
> *—Book 2, page 232*

The idea of non-separation is the only thing I know of that can totally overwrite the idea of judgment and condemnation. When I stand in non-separation I stand convinced of my own innocence—and of God's love. For if God and I are One, who would God judge, and who, condemn? Moreover, why? Would my right hand punish my left for something that it could not have done without the cooperation of the Whole Body?

What can I do without God? And if everything I do, I do *with* God, how then am I deserving of punishment?

This is the first breathtaking reality of non-separation. A second extraordinary aspect of non-separation is that it produces total visibility *automatically.*

Ironically, we think that when other people know all about us they will reject us, when the truth is that when other people come to know all about us, they much more often than not accept us with compassion and understanding—for if they are self-honest they will know that they are seeing nothing in us that they have not seen in themselves.

Non-separation is the major groove of the CwG Double-Helix because it is the more powerful of the two energies. Its power is generated by its pervasiveness. Oneness is ubiquitous. It is by definition everywhere present, everywhere expressed, everywhere seen. A conscious awareness of the Energy of Oneness produces a seamless experience between sentient beings that makes visibility not only comfortable but impossible to avoid.

Concept #42

Transparency is the fast track of evolution.

Often I am asked, "What is the fastest path to enlightenment?" My answer is short and direct. "Tell the truth," I said. "Always. To everyone. About everything. Period."

Why this is the fast track is because when you commit to revealing everything about yourself to everyone important in your life, and when you agree to tell the truth to all people about everything, you become totally seen. This alone generates an inner will and the desire to step up to the line and embark with renewed energy on the path of self-realization, because we ourselves do not want to be seen in certain ways. There are things we do in private that we would never do in public . . . and if every single thought, word, and deed were known by all of humanity, humanity itself would be an entirely different species.

What keeps humanity hidden from its own Divinity is humanity's insistence on being hidden from itself. (The result of so-called sunshine laws that require companies and governments to reveal everything about all their transactions is that those transactions have become much more above-board, much more accountable, and much cleaner than they used to be.)

Transparency is the Sunshine Law of Human Behavior.

Exercise

Take out three sheets of paper and write down the names of three living people who are important to you, one on each sheet.

At the top of the each paper write: What I'm Afraid to Tell You Is . . .

Now, under each name, finish the sentence above. Tell the person everything that you are fearful of saying—and why you are afraid of saying it. Hold nothing back. Say it all. This does not have to be done with challenging or attacking or resentful energy, however. A wonderful teacher once shared with me: "Speak your truth, but soothe your words with peace."

After you've finished writing, consider whether you would like the person whose name is on the sheet to see this statement from you. Or perhaps you would like to just "talk things out" now that you've gotten your thoughts in order. In either case, look at your level of willingness to be transparent about your thoughts and feelings concerning this person.

Oh, by the way . . . the statements are not required to be negative. Often people are afraid to say positive things to another as well (such as, for instance, "I love you"). So this exercise works both ways.

Further Discussion:
What you don't know won't hurt me

Rev. Terry Cole-Whittaker, one of my life's most wonderful teachers, used to say, "What you don't know won't hurt me" when she laughingly described what many people are thinking when they keep things to themselves.

Sometimes we have convinced ourselves that we are staying quiet about something for another person's "own good." Yet it is rarely good for another person to be playing life's game with one less card than you have dealt yourself.

I have learned in my life that it is better to tell the truth, in every instance, than to lie by omission or commission. And so I have always been impressed and inspired by the concept of the Five Levels of Truth Telling described in one powerful paragraph in the first chapter of *CwG, Book 2.*

I urge all of you studying this material to turn to page 14 of the Anniversary Edition and read this material, considering each level deeply, and looking at what it would mean in your life (if you have an older copy of *Book 2,* just scan chapter 1 . . . it's just a few paragraphs in).

To pause and reflect

Assignment

Take an honest look at how visible you are willing to be with various people in your life. Using the chart below, measure the level of transparency in these life relationships.

Place a check in the column that most closely describes the level of transparency with which you conduct your relationships where the left-hand column applies.

RELATIONSHIP	VERY Transparent	SOMEWHAT Transparent	NOT AT ALL Transparent
My Spouse or Partner			
My Oldest Child			
My Youngest Child			
My Spouse's Parents			
My Mother			
My Father			
My Sister			
My Brother			
My Best Friend			
My Co-Workers			
My Boss			
My Self			

Look to see if there are any major variances in how you interact with different people. If there are, ask yourself "Why?"

If you have marked "Not At All Transparent" for any person, inquire of yourself, "What am I afraid of with regard to this person?"

Write your answer below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Come prepared to discuss this with your study group next week, or make an entry in your journal regarding this and review that entry one month from now, adding any additional thoughts that occur to you at that time.

CHAPTER 23

ADDITIONAL INQUIRIES—*BOOK 2*

In addition to the concepts explored in chapters 15 through 22 of this companion, *Conversations with God, Book 2* contains many other specific ideas with which I feel it is important to be familiar if one is to have a rich understanding of the totality of this material. We therefore conclude this review of *Book 2* with a list of experiments that encourage deeper exploration.

These questions drive to some of the finer points in the book. The thought and discussions that will result from these questions cannot help but enhance your ability to apply the book's truths to real life, rendering this wisdom *functional in your daily experience.* That, of course, is the point of the original dialogue and of this companion as well.

For study groups the questions form a perfect basis for stimulating and far-reaching discussion. If you are moving through this *CwG Companion* at home, responding to the questions in writing in your journal will greatly sharpen comprehension.

Answers are found in the closing section of this book. Each answer is followed by a page number (in parentheses) from the newly released (2008) Anniversary Edition of

Conversations with God, Book 2, for your convenience in locating the relevant portion of the text in the book itself.

This answer key may be used by study group leaders to facilitate the group's discussion. For group participants and those working on their own, try not to refer to the answer key or the book until you have attempted to answer the question on your own.

The following questions cover material not necessarily found in this companion, but relate directly to other material found in chapters 1–7 of *Book 2 . . .*

1. *CwG* says there are Five Levels of Truth Telling. What are they?
2. *CwG* says that "feelings are the language of the soul." Yet some feelings seem very negative, even anger-laden or fearful. What is the difference between a "true feeling" and what *CwG* calls a "counterfeit feeling"?
3. Explain the true nature of Time, and why it is not a left-to-right, start here/stop there thing.
4. Explain more of the mystery of Time. Why does *CwG* call it simply a mental construction?
5. Complete the following statement: Religion asks you to learn from the experience of others. Spirituality urges you to . . .
6. *Book 2* contains one of the most beautiful spiritual descriptions of human sexuality ever. Please explain TOMARY, and the "Body Between Us," as a function of sexuality.
7. What is meant by Synergistic Energy eXchange?

The following questions cover material not necessarily found in this companion, but relate directly to other material found in chapters 8–14 of *Book 2 . . .*

Please complete the following statement from *Conversations with God:* "Betrayal of yourself in order not to betray another . . ."

What is the first step in educating our young the "CwG way"?

This chapter declares that in great societies, very few laws are necessary. Explain how this could possibly work.

How could the world solve the problems of global poverty and hunger without spending one penny more than it now spends on government programs, and without shifting any wealth from where it now resides to where it is not?

CwG suggests a guideline that can allow us to better know whether we are helping others, or hurting them, by stepping in and offering assistance at crucial times in their lives. What is that guideline?

In one of the most famous statements from *CwG,* God says, regarding the many people who have entered our life: "I have sent you . . ."

In discussing whom to help in our world, and how much, *CwG* offers further insight in chapter 14. Can you complete this statement from Jesus? "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was homeless, and you found me shelter. I was naked and you clothed me; I was ill and you visited me; I was in prison and you brought me comfort. And they will say to me, Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you? Or thirsty, and give you drink? And when did we see you homeless and find you shelter? Or naked, and clothed you? And when did we see you ill, or in prison, and comfort you? And I will answer them, replying . . ."

The following questions cover material not necessarily found in this companion, but relate directly to other material found in chapters 15–20 of *Book 2 . . .*

The shortest piece of dialogue in all of the Conversations with God books is also among the most beloved. Can you quote it? (HINT: It makes up the entire chapter in several of the CwG texts.)

What is the biggest "dare" that *CwG* offers to people who own or manage businesses and want to do it the "CwG Way"?

What does *CwG* say about how to create a "better life" in terms of goals and objectives?

What creates joy in the workplace?

What does *CwG* have to say about "worker's rights"?

What does God say about religion in *Book 2?*

CHAPTER 24

MOVING NOW TO *BOOK 3*

And now our *CwG Companion* advances to the final entry in the original trilogy, by far the longest of all nine Conversations with God books.

This third book opens with an exploration of guilt—that most debilitating of all human emotions. It tells us to drop guilt from our experience, get it off the radar screen, because guilt never produces growth—and growth is the purpose of all of life.

> You will not grow through guilt, but only shrivel and die. Awareness is what you seek. But awareness is not guilt, and love is not fear.
>
> *—Book 3, page 11 (all cites are from the Anniversary Edition)*

My very first deep exploration of guilt came at the side of Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, whom I had the extraordinary honor of knowing and serving as a staff member for a time in the late 1980s—which now seems like a century ago.

One of the first things that Dr. Kübler-Ross taught me eventually made its way into the Conversations with God books, when the dialogue quoted Elisabeth directly with the following . . .

Concept #43

Guilt and fear are the only enemies of man.

I have come to see the deep wisdom in this observation. I have come to know and to experience that guilt serves no one. This does not mean that we are absent *regret,* but it does mean that we are throwing away *guilt.*

Guilt is a judgment. It is an assessment that says we are "bad," "unworthy," and . . . well . . . *guilty.* In Man's use of this word, once we are proclaimed "guilty" we can never be "innocent" again. "Guilty" is a Forever Indictment. It will not go away. Once guilty, always guilty.

Regret is another matter. A person can be regretful, but "regretful" is different from "guilty." Enormously different. Even the energies coming off the two words are remarkably different.

Concept 43 can be extraordinarily cleansing and freeing, if understood and embraced. There really *are* only two enemies of our minds . . . guilt and fear. Get rid of the first and we can look backward without shame. Get rid of the second and we can look forward without anxiety.

Shame and Anxiety are the biggest blockages of a human being's energy circulation system.

You know, of course, that energy flows through your body along what are called pathways, channels, or *meridians,* just as blood flows through your arteries. You might say that energy meridians are the "arteries of the soul."

Just as you can have blockages of the arteries, so, too, can you have blockages of the meridians. And nothing clogs meridians more profoundly than Shame and Anxiety—the by-products of Guilt and Fear.

Exercise

All of us have done some things that we probably wouldn't do again, given the chance to act out a scenario from our life over again. List in your mind (or write very

BIG NO-NOs	Good about It	Regretful about It	Guilty about It
1. I was _____years old and I _____ and today I feel . . .	☐	☐	☐
2. I was _____years old and I _____ and today I feel . . .	☐	☐	☐
3. I was _____years old and I _____ and today I feel . . .	☐	☐	☐

small in the space above) the three biggest "no-nos" that you have done in you life, starting with the earliest you can remember and going right up to the latest one. Then check the box to the right that seems closest to how you feel about it today.

Further Discussion:
Saying goodbye is so hard to do

Many people have never gone to "guilt" at all when the event happened. Others have "graduated" from initial guilt to a feeling of simple regret. Still others now actually feel good about what occurred and the part they played in it. Where are you with all this? Is there anything in your life that you feel guilty about? Be honest with yourself when you ask this question.

Conversations with God invites us to slough off both guilt and fear. Yet, saying "goodbye" can be so hard to do. Guilt, in particular, can very easily become our friend. A false friend indeed, but a friend nonetheless.

We become friends with guilt when we use it to feel bad about ourselves. Feeling bad about ourselves sometimes, in a strange way, assuages our guilt—as if feeling bad is somehow a "pay back," somehow a punishment, for what we did. "I did it, alright, but look how bad I've felt about it since!" That sort of thing. So in a strange way, guilt actually assuages guilt. At least for some people. (What's the old joke? "It helps to be Catholic or Jewish . . .")

The real question is, what would we be without our guilt? *Then* what would we feel bad about?

To pause and reflect

Assignment

PART ONE: *Take out a sheet of paper and write in random spaces on the paper all the things you feel guilty about, or HAVE felt guilty about, in your life.*

If you have nothing that falls into this category, skip right to Part Two. If you have some things to list, place notations about them on the paper, randomly, with lots of space in between.

(Do not write on the back. If you need more than one sheet, use more paper.)

Now light a candle and place it next to an ashtray (or something that can serve as an ashtray).

Now take the paper on which you have written and tear it into pieces around each of the notations, so that each scrap of paper has a notation on it.

Now, hold each scrap of paper in your hand and read it to yourself, holding the idea of your guilt about one in your mind one last time. Then . . .

. . . hold the paper over the candle flame and burn the paper. Let your mind watch your guilt go up in smoke.

PART TWO: *Make a list below of three things you have done in your life that you regret (as opposed to those things about which you feel "guilty").*

Being honest with yourself (no one else ever has to see this), fill in the blanks in the columns to the right. If it is easier, make your own form on the separate piece of paper.

Return to your study group next week prepared to discuss your experience.

THREE THINGS I REGRET DOING	Why I did what I did	What I got out of it and what I didn't	What I would do if I had it to do over
1.			
2.			
3.			

CHAPTER 25

THE PARABLE OF THE ROCK

No one who wishes to seriously study the Conversations with God material and understand its most subtle implications can afford to lightly skip over the Parable of the Rock.

One of the most insightful explanations how the physical Universe works produces a breathtaking spiritual revelation at one and the same time in this remarkable seven-paragraph narrative.

The story is told in the context of a larger discussion of the phenomenon of time (it is really a function of perspective) and the process by which Divinity experiences Itself through each of its Individuations—some of Whom are called "you" and "me."

The parable explains, for the first time in the Conversations with God discourse, the actual *mechanics* of the Space/Time Continuum, and how it is possible that there is only One Time and One Place (Here and Now), even though we experience—in a very real way—what we call Then and There.

You will never again have difficulty explaining to any listener or student the oft-quoted New Thought teaching, "There is no such thing as Time. There is only Now."

How is this possible when we are experiencing the passing of time all the . . . er . . . *time* . . . ?

The answer is that we are living in an Alice in Wonderland world, in which all is illusion.

> Even as you look at a solid object through a microscope, seeing that it is not solid at all, but actually a conglomeration of a million different effects—different things all happening at once and thus creating the larger effect—so, too, do you use time as the microscope of your soul.
>
> *—Book 3, page 72*

The purpose of our being here has to do with the very Nature of Who You Really Are. You are not who you say you are, and this place is not the place you think it is. In fact, it is quite true that . . .

Concept #44

Nothing you see is real.

For instance, a rock seems to you to be an inanimate object. You have been taught that it is, and you observe that it is. The rock that you found in the gift store with the little "saying" carved into it has been sitting on your desk as a paperweight for twelve years and it hasn't budged an inch. Yet it is moving.

Within itself.

If you put the rock under a microscope, you will observe this movement. Nothing, in fact, about the rock will be motionless. Nothing will be standing still. Motionlessness is not a characteristic of the rock. And if you told the rock it was not moving a bit, it would think you were crazy. It experiences itself as an element of life whose parts are *racing around all the time,* moving at insane speed relative to their size. In fact, it is *this very action* that holds the rock together and causes it to appear as if it has no movement at all.

We see, then, that movement creates the illusion of non-movement. And the more movement there is, and the faster that movement is relative to the space in which it is occurring, the more stillness there appears to be.

Did you get that????

If you did, you have just peeked into the mechanics of the Universe, and you now understand how all things move and all things stand still—*depending on your point of view.*

The closer you are to something, the more it appears to move. The farther away you are from something, the more it seems to stand still. Everything depends upon the place from where you are observing. Close up: movement. Far back: stillness.

Our galaxy has no movement at all, looked at from far enough way. Observed from the outer edge of the Universe, we are just a dot in the sky. If you could somehow look at the *Universe itself* from far enough outside of the Universe, the Universe itself would look like a tiny dot in the sky.

Far out as this may seem, there are now cosmologists who are saying that our Universe is but One of a *Universe* of Universes.

. . . and so now you begin to understand . . . infinity.

Exercise

Sink back into that thought. Let yourself just close your eyes and hold the sudden awareness to which this revelation has just brought you. Let the idea slowly swirl in your mind for a minute. Don't search for any conclusions there. Just let the idea swirl.

Put the book down and do this.

You are now gaining an appreciation for the elegant simplicity and the immense complexity of the physics and metaphysics of all of life.

Suddenly Shakespeare's famous line rings with new and luscious meaning . . .

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

Further Discussion:
Seeing is believing

Most of us are pretty convinced that what we see is what is so. We've got it all figured out, and most things aren't up for discussion anymore—more's the pity. Because by closing the door to continuing exploration of the Already Known, we know it not.

That's why *Conversations with God* invites us, in its now famous phrase, to "consider the possibility that there is something you do not understand about God and about Life, the understanding which would change everything."

To pause and reflect

Assignment

Turn to chapter 3 of CwG, Book 3 *and find the Parable of the Rock there. Have someone read it aloud in your next study group session . . . and when you get home (or if you are working alone) record the parable and load it into your computer, so that you can play it back at will.*

Play the story back over and over again, many times each week, until you have it virtually memorized. Make it a point to discuss this parable at length in your study group, or with a friend if you are studying this material outside of a group.

Ask the following questions:

What is this parable saying?
What does it matter what it is saying?
What are the daily life implications of this story?

CHAPTER 26

GOD WILL NEVER FORGIVE YOU

We have been told from the earliest days of our childhood that we must pray to God to forgive us for our sins. Now along comes *Conversations with God* to tell us that you can pray all you want, but it won't make any difference. God will never forgive you for anything. Ever.

Why? Why would God be so mean?

Well, if you have been really integrating the material you have studied in this *CwG Companion* so far, you already know the answer. If you need a clue, turn back to chapter 1, section 6.

There you will find a discussion of a very controversial idea (Concept 6) that is foundational to the Conversations with God material: THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS "RIGHT" AND "WRONG." With this is a given, it is very clear why God will never forgive you for anything. It is not because God is "mean." It is because *there is no need to. You have not done anything "wrong."*

Precisely because this idea is so spiritually revolutionary, God returns to it a number of times throughout the three thousand-plus-page CwG dialogue, but perhaps never so eloquently as when She explores the question of human worthiness, as He does in chapter 4 of *Book 3.*

Unworthiness is the worst indictment ever visited upon the human race. You have based your sense of worthiness on the past, while I base your sense of worthiness on the future.

The future, the future, always the future! That is where your life is, not in the past. The future. That is where your truth is, not in the past.

What you have done is unimportant compared to what you are about to do. How you have erred is insignificant compared to how you are about to create.

I forgive your mistakes. All of them. I forgive your misplaced passions. All of them. I forgive your erroneous notions, your misguided understandings, your hurtful actions, your selfish decisions. All of them.

Others may not forgive you, but I do. Others may not release you from your guilt, but I do. Others may not let you forget, allow you to go on, become something new, but I do. For I know that you are not what you were, but are, and always will be, what you are now.

A sinner can become a saint in one minute. In one second. In one breath.

In truth, there is no such thing as a "sinner," for no one can be sinned against—least of all Me. That is why I say that I "forgive" you. I use the phrase because it is one you seem to understand.

In truth, I do not forgive you, and will not forgive you ever, for anything. I do not have to. There is nothing to forgive. But I can release you. And I hereby do. Now. Once again. As I have done so often in the past, through the teachings of so many other teachers.

—Book 3, page 96

I have chosen a rather long excerpt for this particular topic—indeed, the longest text reference in this entire companion—because I consider this to be the second most important theological statement made in *CwG*'s nine books. (The first? WE ARE ALL ONE.)

Individuals' lives would be turned upside-down with joy, and, indeed, the entire world would change, if we thought that the following was true: You need never worry about not receiving forgiveness from God. This because you do not *need* God's forgiveness. Not for anything at all. And *this* is because of . . .

Concept #45

No one does anything inappropriate, given their model of the world.

This is a judgment-stopping, mind-opening statement from *Conversations with God.* What we learn from this revelation is that no matter what the situation in which someone says you have offended, you are never the true offender. It is your understanding that is lacking, not you. It is your present awareness that is incomplete, not you. It is your consciousness that is limited, not you.

What needs expansion, what needs healing, is not you, but the idea you hold about life and how it is, about you and who you are, about God and what God wants. What needs changing is your model of the world.

Exercise

Let's make an assessment of where you've been, where you are, and where you're going with regard to your model of the world.

Think of your life as a movie. Running the "film" of your thoughts past the "projector" of your mind (your mind projects into physicality the nonphysical energies that you call "ideas"), take one filmstrip at a time below and see what has been, is now, and will be projected onto the world by you with regard to a particular "script."

Each three-frame strip represents one "movie" that you are running in your mind about one topic covered by your script.

In the first frame for each movie, put into a few words your *earliest* "model of the world" concerning the topic listed at the top of each "filmstrip" below.

In the second frame, make a notation of what your thinking is *today* on these same subjects.

Finally, in the third frame of the filmstrip, write out your vision of the Most Wonderful Model of the World of the *future* that you can think of with regard to the topic of the "film."

You're invited to do this for three topics, represented by three filmstrips, below. Look to see how your understanding, your awareness, and your consciousness have evolved.

GOD

My earliest model of the world with regard to this topic was that . . .

My present model of the world with regard to this topic is that . . .

My future model of the world with regard to topic this is that . . .

LIFE

My earliest model of the world with regard to this topic was that . . .

My present model of the world with regard to this topic is that . . .

My future model of the world with regard to topic this is that . . .

MYSELF

My earliest model of the world with regard to this topic was that . . .

My present model of the world with regard to this topic is that . . .

My future model of the world with regard to topic this is that . . .

Further Discussion:
Seeing the perfection

God sees you as perfect, just as you see your own grandchild as perfect, even as she breaks the family heirloom.

You are, to God, as an innocent child is to you. God understands that you are doing the best you can at any given moment. You are operating with what you know and understand, and working things out in the best way you know how. You have done nothing to hurt or offend God, and you never could.

It has been said in *Conversations with God,* and I will say it again here: if *you* saw you as *God* sees you, you would smile a lot . . .

It has also been said in *Conversations with God:* there is neither judgment nor condemnation in the Afterlife. There is only the joyous return of your Essence to God, and the reunion of your soul with all those you have loved.

This contradicts the mainstay of every major religion on Earth. It pulls out the underpinning of virtually every theology. It undoes what every old-time, orthodox spiritual teacher, minister, rabbi, and ulama has tried to get us to do: *live in fear of God.*

To pause and reflect

Assignment

God tells us in Book 3 *that the reason we have not believed God's greatest promise (that we are utterly innocent and do not "need" God's forgiveness) is that we cannot believe in the goodness of God.*

For this assignment, please read the last four pages of CwG, Book 3, *chapter 4. Discuss this passage with your study group. If you are studying this material alone, please write your impressions of this important passage in your journal. Answer the following questions . . .*

How does this passage square with "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"?

If we have different beliefs from those expressed here, should we stick to those beliefs or abandon them?

Regarding the idea of any soul being "lost," is anyone ever lost forever? How does the Judeo-Christian-Islamic idea of an Afterlife of reward or punishment differ from the ideas proposed here?

Do you believe the ideas here have come to humanity from God? If so, why would they be different from the ideas that are said to have come from God before, through Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad?

CHAPTER 27

THE QUESTION OF DEATH

Nothing has held humanity's attention and captured humanity's imagination more than the experience we call "death."

Conversations with God, as one might expect, has a great deal to say on the subject. The most extensive commentary is found in the final book of the CwG series, *Home with God in a Life That Never Ends.* That entire book is devoted to discussions of end-of-life phenomena. If you seek to really explore the question of death in depth, it is *highly* recommended that you obtain and thoroughly read *Home with God.*

Having said that, we note here that *CwG, Book 3* offers us a tantalizing introduction to the topic.

The clear aim of the discussion in *Book 3* is to bring us all to a place of comfort with regard to our own death. It begins this process by eliminating from our mind that thought that we can "die" at all (in the sense of ending our lives). It tells us that, at the moment of what we call "death," we merely change the form in which we live.

This idea is not new to the CwG reader. It has been stated before. But now *CwG* offers us a new perspective on death as an "ending" . . .

> Each moment ends the instant it begins. If you do not see this, you will not see what is exquisite in it, and you will call the moment ordinary.
>
> Each interaction "begins to end" the instant it "begins to begin."
>
> Only when this is truly contemplated and deeply understood does the full treasure of every moment—and of life itself—open to you.
>
> Life cannot give itself to you if you do not understand death. You must do more than understand it. You must love it, even as you love life.
>
> *—Book 3, page 155*

You cannot love life if you fear death. For if you fear death, you will always walk in fear throughout your life. Someone once said that *all* fear is ultimately a fear of death. Put another way, when the fear of death is removed from your life, your life itself is lived fearlessly. For if you do not fear even death, what else could make you tentative or skittish? And why?

And so, in this portion of the dialogue, God wants us to know that death is not real. Oh, the experience *occurs,* most assuredly, but it is not the experience that we have imagined it to be. In that sense, it is not real.

Yes, God says, death occurs, but it is the most joyous experience of your life! For now you are, at last, returning Home. You are reassuming your natural state. You are living *totally as a soul once again.*

Concept #46

Nothing is painful that you understand is not real.

There is a difference between that which is *real* and that which is *realistic.* No matter how realistic a movie is, we know that it is not real. And so, there should be no pain when you watch a scene in a movie where someone is hurt in an accident or in some other life event. If you do feel actual pain, you may have a challenge dissociating with fictional characters and situations.

Even if you are watching a movie or a home video of yourself in some situation in which you were hurt or suffering, you should feel no pain. It's just a video. It's not real. It may have been real once, but now you are simply watching a picture of it.

Nothing is painful if you understand it is not real. It could be painful if you thought it was real.

I remember once when I was being initiated into a club. They put a blindfold on me and told me this was going to be a challenging initiation, but not to get all upset because, as they put it, "the pain will only last for a second or two."

Well, of course, my mind raced. What could they be thinking of doing? I wondered. Then they told me. "We're just going to make a tiny cut, a tiny incision, in your forearm, just enough to draw some blood. This is a blood oath you have to take. We need a drop of your actual blood on a document here that you're going to sign. Do you trust us?"

"Uh . . . yeah, I guess so," I stammered.

"You *guess* so?" they responded. "You've got to do better than that! We're going to become blood brothers here."

"Okay, okay, I trust you!" I said.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, yes, I'm sure!"

"Okay, then . . . hold out your arm, point your hand to the ceiling. And don't try to look through the blindfold, because it'll just make you nervous and get you to all tensed up. Okay, Jim, give me the knife."

"Knife?" I blurted out.

"I told you, we're just going to cut you a tiny bit. Just a little slice. It'll only hurt for *two seconds.* We know. We've done this before. We all had it done to us. Okay, are you ready?"

I told them that I was, and they had me hold my arm up

Then they cut me on the forearm. It must have been deeper than they intended, because it seared and burned almost at once—and then I could feel the blood actually dripping down my arm!

"Ow!" I said. "That *hurt!* You went too *deep.* I've got blood dripping down my arm."

They all laughed. Then they took my blindfold off. And I was shocked. They had not cut me at all. There wasn't even a knife in the room. All I saw was an ice cube.

They had used an *ice cube.* As a ruse. It felt to me exactly like someone cutting into me. And the water from the cube running down my arm . . . the perfect effect. I was certain that it was blood . . .

I took the time and the trouble to tell you this little story because I wanted you to be able to instantly relate to a worldly life experience that put me instantly in touch with

what has become an extraordinarily important insight in my life: *just because something is realistic, that does not mean it is real.*

Now the thing we call "death" seems very real to all of us—and I'm sure that when I am dying it's going to seem very real to me and to everyone around me. It's during those final moments that I hope I'm able to remember . . . that I'm going to do my best to remember . . . the story of the Ice Cube I Thought Was a Knife. It's during those final moments that I am wanting to step into the Place of Grace, and know that just because something is realistic, that does not mean it is real.

Exercise

Have the study group take turns reading aloud the passage on "death" in *Book 3,* chapter 8 that begins, "Your time with each person would be glorified if you thought it was your last time with that person," and ends with "Life thus begets life, and cannot know death, ever."

This is one of the most beautiful passages having to do with what is called "death" that you will ever read in any book.

Discuss thoroughly what the dialogue offers here, comparing it to the other things you have been told and taught about death. Share your experience about the death of a loved one (if you have ever had such an experience).

Ask the group if anyone has even actually witnessed someone leaving the body. If people have, ask them to relate their experience and the feelings that came up for them around that.

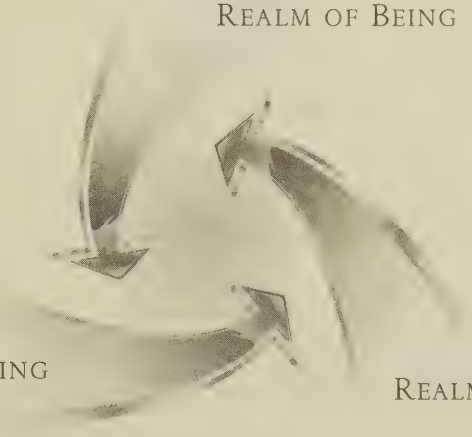
Further Discussion:
The eternal cycle of life

Each of us faces the reality of our own mortality. The fact of our mortality does not mean that death is real (in the sense of our life, our existence, being "over"), but it does mean that we may choose for this particular incarnation, this specific experience of physicalization, to be continued in a different way.

It is important to understand that not only do we never really "die" . . . we also never become something that is "non-physical." *Non-physicality* is impossible. You cannot *not*

be physical. But you *can* be physical in a larger way. You can be *meta*-physical. That is, "bigger than life." Or, to put it more accurately, bigger than the "life" that human beings are able to perceive and experience while they are limited by primitive-level physicality (as opposed to the advanced-level physicality that we embrace cyclically throughout all eternity).

You see, our soul journeys through life in cycles. We move from the Realm of Knowing into the Realm of Experiencing into the Realm of Being and back into the Realm of Knowing again, and through the cycle once more, in a never-ending process by which the soul evolves and through which God Itself becomes what God is next going to be.



Can you explain the different expressions of Divinity that occur in the three realms on the Cycle of Life—and why there are three realms?

It may help you to think of the Realm of Knowing as the Spiritual Realm, the Realm of Experiencing as the Physical Realm, and the Realm of Being as the Spirysical Realm, where all life expression combines to produce Ultimate Reality.

(HINT: A close reading of *Home with God in a Life That Never Ends* may help you to understand the eternal Journey of the Soul through these realms on the Eternal Cycle of Life.)

I am convinced that we are all Holy Creatures, parts of All That Is, aspects of Divinity, moving through Time and Space in a "joint venture with God." We are in the Business of Becoming.

Do we carry our emotions, our loves and our dreams, our closeness to others and our wonderful hearts with us through all these revolutions of the cycle? Yes, I believe we do. And we are never alone, never without those we love and have loved—as explained so wonderfully in *Home with God in a Life That Never Ends.*

To pause and reflect

Assignment

While this companion is a study guide for CwG, Book 3, *the assignment here is to take your exploration outside of this individual text and to the world at large. In the next thirty days take a survey. Ask at least a hundred people if they have ever had an out-of-body experience. Keep a record of what they tell you, then report your findings to your study group, or place them in your journal.*

Continue your excursions outside of Book 3 *by picking up a copy of* Home with God in a Life That Never Ends *and reading it from cover-to-cover. Make a note of what, if anything, is revealed to you there that you had never heard before, never considered before, about "life after death."* Home with God *is the final book in the CwG series of books, and it offers by far the most extensive exploration of what happens on your Continuation Day—and why. It is "must" reading for anyone with the least bit of interest in the subject of death.*

CHAPTER 28

ABOUT PROMISES—AND CREATION

Next we move into one of the most challenging areas of *CwG*'s exploration of life: promises and creation.

Everyone wants everyone else to keep their promises. Yet promises are extremely hard to keep, and for a startling reason: *they run counter to the energy flow of life itself.*

> As most of you are now living your life, there is a lie built into every promise. The lie is that you can know now how you will feel about a thing, and what you will want to do about that thing, on any given tomorrow. You cannot know this if you are living your life as a reactive being—which most of you are. Only if you are living life as a creative being can your promise not contain a lie.
>
> Creative beings can know how they are going to feel about a thing at any time in the future because creative beings create their feelings, rather than experiencing them.

> Until you can create your future, you cannot predict your future. Until you can predict your future, you cannot promise anything truthfully about it.
>
> *—Book 3, page 227*

Life, you see, is a process. It is a process through which life forms evolve. And this process—indeed, all of Life Itself—could be summed up in one word: CHANGE.

The fact of the matter, *everything is changing all of the time.* Nothing is not changing, at any point. That is because all of life is *movement.* Life is energy, moving. Energy, by *definition,* moves. If something does not move, it is said to have no *energy.* In truth, such a phenomenon is impossible. There is nothing that is not moving. Movement is the nature of life, and without movement, life cannot be. Indeed, movement is another *word* for "life." Life IS movement. "Life" is a four-letter word for an eight-letter word.

And "movement" is an eight-letter word for a six-letter word: change. Because if a thing moves, then it necessarily changes. And if it moves *all the time,* then it never is the same. Not for one moment. Not from one minute, one second, one nano-second, to the next. *Nothing* stays the *same.* Everything is changing (that is, moving) all the time.

How a thing changes, and who is *causing* it to change in any particular way, is the measure of a Master. The process of creation is the process of *determining* how anything is going to change. This process is a tool, one handle of which is placed in the hands of God and the other handle of which is placed into the hands of every sentient being.

An extraordinary description of this process will be found in the book *Happier Than God.* That book is a complete description of How Life Works. *Mechanically,* that is. It is a blueprint of the machinery of life.

What we are told in chapter 13 of *Conversations with God, Book 3* is that because all of the above is so, it is very difficult for most human beings to keep their promises. It is not impossible, but it is extremely challenging. That's because it is against the very nature of Life Itself to not change—and a promise is a commitment to do just that: NOT CHANGE.

In fact, we *cannot* "not change." What we can do, however, is change in a way that puts everything back in place in almost the exact same way. This creates (to the casual observer) the *appearance* and the *experience* of something not changing—and that is how human promises are kept.

For a fuller explanation of this, read pages 227–230 of the Anniversary Edition of *Book 3.* At the end of that reading you will come across . . .

Concept #47

Betrayal of yourself in order not to betray another is betrayal nonetheless. It is the highest betrayal.

Even a Master will produce change in a way that *looks* like change, in a way that provides the Student with the *appearance* and the *experience* of change, if the Master is confronted with a circumstance that puts her authenticity on the line. A Master will never give up authenticity in order to keep things looking the same.

Does this mean that we have no right to ever hope or expect that people will keep their word? About *anything?*

That is a fair question. And to this question *Conversations with God, Book 3* offers one of the most stunning answers ever placed in a book of spiritual wisdom.

> Why would you want such a right?
>
> The only reason that another person would not keep their word to you would be because they didn't want to—or they felt they couldn't, which is the same thing.
>
> And if a person did not want to keep his word to you, or for some reason felt he just couldn't, why on Earth would you want him to?
>
> Do you really want someone to keep an agreement she does not want to keep? Do you really feel people should be forced to do things they don't feel they can do?
>
> Why would you want to force anyone to do anything against his will?
>
> *—Book 3, page 231*

When this answer was given in the CwG text, I protested. My reply was . . . "Well, try this for a reason: because to let them get away with not doing what they said they were going to do would hurt me—or my family."

To which God answered . . .

"So in order to avoid injury, you're willing to *inflict* injury."

I said that I didn't see how it injures another simply to ask him to keep his word.

"Yet *he* must see it as injurious, or he would keep it *willingly,*" God responded.

But I just wouldn't let go of it. I said: "So *I* should suffer the injury, or watch my *children* and *family* suffer the injury, rather than 'injure' the one who made a promise by simply asking that it be kept?"

And here was God's astonishing answer:

> Do you really think that if you force another to keep a promise that you will have escaped injury?
>
> I tell you this: More damage has been done to others by persons leading lives of quiet desperation (that is, doing what they felt they "had" to do) than ever was done by persons freely doing what they wanted to do.
>
> When you give a person freedom, you remove danger, you don't increase it.
>
> Yes, letting someone "off the hook" on a promise or commitment made to you may look like it will hurt you in the short run, but it will never damage you in the long run, because when you give the other person their freedom, you give yourself freedom as well. And so now you are free of the agonies and the sorrows, the attacks on your dignity and your self-worth that inevitably follow when you force another person to keep a promise to you that he or she does not want to keep.
>
> The longer damage will far outweigh the shorter—as nearly everyone who has tried to hold another person to their word has discovered.
>
> *—Book 3, page 232*

I can think of no single passage in the three thousand-plus pages of the Conversations with God dialogue that brings more clarity to all human relationships, and especially human romantic relationships, than what has just been excerpted here.

Exercise

Read the above excerpt again, this time aloud. Then read four of the key phrases or concepts from this material and watch what thoughts come up for you when you do

this. Jot down some of the thoughts here, then share these thoughts with your study group, or write them in your journal.

WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO EXPECT PEOPLE TO EVER KEEP THEIR WORD ABOUT ANYTHING.

WHAT COULD MAKE IT OKAY TO FORCE PEOPLE TO KEEP THEIR WORD?

MORE INJURY IS CREATED BY TRYING TO GET PEOPLE TO KEEP THEIR PROMISES THAN BY JUST LETTING THEM "OFF THE HOOK."

NOTHING CAN EVER REMAIN THE SAME BECAUSE LIFE IS A PROCESS OF CHANGE AND NOTHING EVER STOPS CHANGING.

Further Discussion:
A new way of looking at God

The Conversations with God dialogue gives us a whole new way of looking at God. Among other things, *CwG* tells us that *God is a process.*

Most people have never thought of God in that way. God is, *CwG* says, both the Creator of the Process and the Only Participant in it. We are the orchestra and the conductor in the symphony of life. For the Process that is referred to here is Life Itself.

The material used in that Process is energy. The tool used in that Process is movement. The outcome of that Process is change. God IS that Process. Therefore, God is energy, God is movement, God is change.

The wonder and the marvel of this Process is that *we can control it.* It does not *have to be* controlled by us, but it can be. When it *is,* we are said to have *created* something.

In truth, it is impossible to create anything, *CwG* tells us. This is because everything has already been created. All that ever was, is now, and ever will be, IS NOW. What we do when we *appear* to "create" something is that we simply *call it forth,* bringing it into our experience from the Time/Space Continuum, where it already exists.

Yet if creation is a process of change, what, then are we changing? you might ask. That is a very good question. That is the question only a serious student would ask. The answer: what we are changing is our *point of view.* We are simply changing our *perspective.*

Remember this always: perspective creates perception, perception creates belief, belief creates behavior, behavior creates experience, experience creates reality, and reality creates perspective.

It's a circle.

The fastest way to change our reality is to change our perspective. When we do, we are looking at Life from a different angle. We are noticing that "nothing" cannot exist in the Eternal Realm of God. If we can think of it, it *must* exist, otherwise *how could we think of it?*

You cannot think of nothing. Go ahead, try it. You can't do it. You can only think of *something.* Therefore, that something must already exist.

Even if you could think of nothing, the nothing that you are thinking of must exist as the opposite of Something, so by the very act of thinking of nothing, Nothing exists—just as by the very act of thinking of something, Something exists.

Even your very Self is no more than your thought about yourself. René Descartes put this exquisitely in his immortal observation: *I think, therefore, I am.* ("Cogito ergo sum" . . . or, in his native French: *Je pense, donc je suis.*)

To pause and reflect

Assignment

Think of three of the biggest promises you've made in your entire life. Then fill out the form below, jotting down each of those pledges. Now fill in the arrows that point to the outcome of that transaction most closely describing what happened.

Make sure you pick out big promises for this assignment, such as promises to marry and to remain married to that person "'til death do you part," or promises of everlasting fidelity, or other important promises to your life partner or your children.

IN THE YEAR _____

I WROTE IN STONE THE FOLLOWING PROMISE . . .

→ I kept that promise.

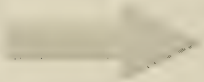
→ I could not keep that promise.

→ I broke that promise outright.

IN THE YEAR

_____

I WROTE IN STONE THE FOLLOWING PROMISE . . .



I kept that promise.

I could not keep that promise.

I broke that promise outright.

IN THE YEAR

_____

I WROTE IN STONE THE FOLLOWING PROMISE . . .

I kept that promise.

I could not keep that promise.

I broke that promise outright.

CHAPTER 29

HIGHLY EVOLVED BEINGS

While many of the phrases and coined words in the Conversations with God dialogues have become part of the lexicon, few have caught the world's imagination more than the term HEB, introduced in chapter 17 of *Book 3* and elaborated on in some detail in the chapter that follows.

HEB is *CwG*'s abbreviation for Highly Evolved Being, and this remarkable book ends with a lively discussion of what daily existence is like for such members of the population of our Universe.

First, it was made clear that such beings *do* exist—and that they live on planets other than the Earth. Second, the dialogue informs us that life where such beings coexist is close to idyllic, with no hunger, poverty, lack of love, and certainly no war. Finally, it was revealed that human beings are on their way to such a level of evolution . . . and that there is much that we can do to help ourselves get there.

We are a race of beings singularly unable to control ourselves.

And if you don't kill yourselves with your nuclear madness, you'll destroy your world with your environmental suicide. You are dismantling your home planet's ecosystem and you continue to say that you're not.

As if that weren't enough, you're tinkering with the biochemistry of life itself. Cloning and genetically engineering, and not doing so with sufficient care to have this be a boon to your species, but threatening instead to make it the greatest disaster of all time. If you are not careful, you will make the nuclear and environmental threats look like child's play.

By developing medicines to do the work that your bodies were intended to do, you've created viruses so resistant to attack that they stand poised to knock out your entire species.

You're getting me a little scared here. Is all lost, then? Is the game over?

No, but it is fourth-and-ten. It's time to throw a Hail Mary, and the quarterback is looking around for receivers in the clear.

Are you clear? Are you able to receive this?

I'm the quarterback and the last time I looked, you and I were wearing the same color jersey. Are we still on the same team?

I thought there was only one team! Who is on the other team?

Every thought which ignores our oneness, every idea which separates us, every action which announces that we are not united. The "other team" is not real, yet it is a part of your reality, for you have made it so.

If you are not careful, your own technology—that which was created to serve you—will kill you.

Right now I can hear some people saying, "But what can one person do?"

They can start by dropping that "what can one person do?" stuff.

> I've already told you, there are hundreds of books on this subject. Stop ignoring them. Read them. Act on them. Awaken others to them. Start a revolution. Make it an evolution revolution.
>
> *—Book 3, pages 302–304*

The process of Life, of evolution, which we discussed in the previous chapter of this *CwG Companion,* is ongoing and eternal, of course. But now that process is taking a new twist. There's a new turn here. We have, as a species, become capable of evolving *consciously,* rather than unconsciously.

This is a huge step forward, and humanity has taken it. We are taking it now, with bigger and bigger strides. Before, we were simply observers of how our species was evolving. Now, we are conscious participants.

That is because more people than ever before are aware of the power of their mind, of their interconnectedness with all things, and of their True Identity.

For many thousands of years the lives of most members of the human race could be categorized as A Case of Mistaken Identity. Not anymore. Now, more and more people every day are becoming clear about the Four Basic Questions of Life:

Who am I?
Where am I?
Why am I where I am?
What am I doing here?

Once those questions are answered, we can evolve consciously—individually and as the collective called humanity.

Concept #48

Life's single impulse is toward higher and higher consciousness, that is, greater and greater experiences of Life Itself.

Evolution emerges from consciousness, and from no other place. "Consciousness" is the name we have given to what might loosely be called self-awareness. To the degree

that a living creature is self-aware, to that degree it is said to be "conscious." Or, if you please, *self-conscious.*

In the way humans use those words, to be self-conscious means to be *too* aware of oneself, to the point where the condition inhibits our behavior. But in metaphysical terms it is impossible to be "too" self-conscious. The higher one's degree of self-awareness, the higher is one's knowing of one's True Identity.

The trick, therefore, is to increase one's self-awareness, to raise one's consciousness to new levels. That is why the New Thought Movement is said to be about Consciousness Raising. It is, indeed, about exactly that. It is about causing us to remember Who We Really Are.

Conversations with God tells us that the fastest way for us to remember Who We Really Are is for us to cause *others* to remember who *they* really are. That is why every world religion teaches its version of: *DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE IT DONE UNTO YOU.*

CwG urges the same thing—yet not because it is a "nice thing to do," or is "morally correct," or is "God's Will." But rather, because it is the *mechanism of the Universe.* It is How Life Works. What leaves you in the form of energy comes back to you in the form of energy. It must always be this way, and for what (for some) may seem like a surprising reason: *there's no one else in the room.*

What you do for me you do for you, and what you fail to do for me you fail to do for you, for the simple reason that you and I are One. It only looks as if we are separate. The difference between HEBs and other creatures of the Universe is that HEBs understand this.

(Yet if you and I are One, are we not One, also, with HEBs? And if we are, do we, too, not also understand this? The answer is, yes. Yet we do not always *remember* that we understand it. Like a dream that we cannot quite call up to present awareness, the memory of our True Identity, and all that goes with it, has faded. And in the early stages of our "recovery" (life is not a process of self-discovery, but of self-*REcovery!*), it can sometimes be difficult to recapture our self-awareness.

The question then becomes: *What is a process by which we can raise our consciousness?*

The answer emerges from the mechanism of the process itself: raise someone *else's* consciousness.

This is the whole point of the Conversations with God books. Indeed, it is the point of all of life. It is our very *raison d'être.*

Exercise

Read pages 305–309 of the Anniversary Edition of *Book 3* for a wonderful example of how beings of higher consciousness react and respond to each other.

(This is chapter 17, and the passage begins with the statement "So the main difference between our society and more highly evolved civilizations elsewhere in the universe is this idea we have of separation.")

This short reading offers a glimpse into the remarkable mindset of HEBs—and a wonderful model for us to follow should we choose to advance our own civilization to new heights.

After reading this passage, answer the following questions:

If you were physically threatened by someone tomorrow, what would you do?

If someone came to your house and then stole something, and you caught them in the act, what would you do?

In this box, please give your reasoning for the answers you gave above . . .

In what way, if at all, do you see these answers differing from the answers that might be given by Highly Evolved Beings?

Further Discussion:
Evolving to new levels

It is the purpose of the Conversations with God series of books to assist humanity in the advancing of its civilization. That is also the purpose of this *CwG Companion.* There are two more concepts that could move that process forward with amazing speed. Individuals who grasp and embrace these concepts may find themselves far out ahead of the majority of people on the Earth—and thus, in a unique position to lead them.

Conversations with God observes that a true leader is not one who says "follow me." A leader is one who says "I'll go first." Here are the final two concepts that this companion invites you to consider as you continue your lifelong study of the CwG material . . .

Concept #49
Life is a process that informs life about life through the process of Life Itself.

All I have to do most of the time is let Life do its job. This is what is meant by the very early message in *Conversations with God, Book 1:* "there's nothing you have to do."

It means there is nothing you are *required* to do to get where you want to go. Nothing is required of you to "get into heaven." Nothing is demanded of you to "stay in God's good graces." And nothing is necessary for you to do to go through life except to *go through life.*

Life Itself is the process, and you need add nothing to it. And you will learn, as the creator of the *est* Training, Werner Erhard. so succinctly pointed out, that *life will resolve itself in the process of life itself.*

The only time that you will experience that there is anything you have to do is when and if you believe that what is happening right here, right now is somehow not okay, somehow not what is "supposed" to be occurring, somehow other than what is perfect for your own evolution. You will return to peace when you realize that it is impossible for whatever is happening not to be perfect, and that the evidence of its perfection *is the fact that it's happening.* (The marvelous teacher Byron Katie and her extraordinary book, *Loving What Is,* are a gift to this planet. I urge you to become acquainted with both.)

Yet because life is a process that informs itself about itself does not mean that you can have no role to play in that process. It is not about you standing on the sidelines as an unwitting observer, watching and waiting to see what is going to happen next. You have been given wonderful tools with which to engage in the Process Called Life. Not the least of those tools is the final concept to be explored in this book . . .

Concept #50

If you saw you as God sees you, you would smile a lot.

Life was meant to be happy.

Do you believe that?

It's true. I know it doesn't seem like it when you look around, but it's true. Life was meant to be happy.

You were meant to be happy. And if you *are* happy, you were meant to be happier. Even if you're *very* happy, you can be even happier.

How happy? Just *how* happy can you be? Well . . . you can be *happier than God.*

As most CwG readers know, that is the title of the first post-dialogue book. When the public dialogue was complete with the final book in the CwG series *(Home with God*

in a Life That Never Ends), we were given this handbook as a *toolbox* with which to build the life of our dreams, using the messages in *Conversations with God* as our blueprint.

The key to creating such a life is to see yourself as God sees you. That is perhaps the single most important concept in all of the CwG books. And there is no book that more effectively describes those tools and how to use them than *Happier Than God,* which offers a deep discussion of the Process of Personal Creation and thoroughly examines the five Great Principles of Life. Those principles are . . .

1. *The Energy of Attraction,* which gives you power
2. *The Law of Opposites,* which gives you opportunity
3. *The Gift of Wisdom,* which gives you discernment
4. *The Joy of Wonder,* which gives you imagination
5. *The Presence of Cycles,* which gives you eternity

The whole message of *Conversations with God* is contained in Concept 50. Repeatedly we are told in this remarkable dialogue that most people are living life as A Case of Mistaken Identity. Yet God makes no such mistake. When God sees us, God sees us as We Really Are. And so, three thousand pages of dialogue come down to this: *Who do you think you are, anyway?*

If you think you are simply *a biological incident,* the chance result of the pairing of chemical elements, then you will have one kind of experience of life. If, on the other hand, you think you are a three-part being, made up of body, mind, and spirit, and if you think that Being is *sacred*—the offspring, the issue, the creation of Divinity Itself—then you will have quite another experience of life.

Conversations with God comes to tell us that we are the latter. We are Individuations of Divinity. We are Singularizations of The Singularity. And we have come here to this Earth, we have journeyed in this time and place with our physical body, for *reasons of the soul.*

As you conclude your movement through this *CwG Companion* by answering the questions in the *following,* and final, chapter, you are invited to read *all* of the texts in the Conversations with God series. These include not just *CwG, Books 1, 2,* and *3,* but these as well:

Friendship with God
Communion with God
The New Revelations

Tomorrow's God
What God Wants
Home with God

Each book moves the dialogue forward, containing new and important information. Taken as a whole, the nine books in the series form an entire cosmology, what has been called The New Spirituality. Not a new religion, but a new way of looking at the old religions of our past, helping us to honor the best in those teachings (for there is enormous good and great truth in all of them), while at the same time remaining open to the possibility that there may be something we do not fully understand about God and Life—the understanding of which would change everything.

Conversations with God does not take the position that Old-Time Religion is wrong, but simply that it is *incomplete.* And so, we are as children who have learned their addition and subtraction, but have not yet graduated to multiplication and long division—much less trigonometry—but who nevertheless imagine that we know all we need to know about mathematics.

In fact, we *do.* Addition and subtraction *are* all we need to know to work out any mathematical problem. Yet it might take us years, or perhaps lifetimes, to do so. Multiplication, division, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, calculus, and higher mathematics—to say nothing of computerized calculation—make all of this child's play.

It is the same way with religion. Theology means "knowledge of God," and so long as we think we know, now, everything there is to know on this subject, we can get nowhere on the path of our own evolution. We must therefore do, in theology, what we do in every other area of our life, what we do in science, what we do in medicine, what we do in technology, and yes, what we do in mathematics. We must always *question the prior assumption.*

To pause and reflect

Assignment

Chapters 18 through 21 of Book 3 *contain the most detailed description of the life of Highly Evolved Beings in any of the Conversations with God books—and, for that matter, in just about any spiritual material anywhere.*

Read these chapters thoroughly, and please take notes. Then answer the following questions:

Who owns the Earth?
Who owns the sky?
Who owns the minerals beneath the Earth's surface?
What do human beings need to be truly happy?
What is the purpose of what humanity calls "ownership"?
What is the best system of laws humanity could devise?
What, when all is said and done, is the primary message of Conversations with God?

CHAPTER 30

IN CONCLUSION . . .

And so we have come to the end of a remarkable journey, during which you have walked through the most amazing new spiritual messages to have been brought to this planet in a very, very long time. I can refer to them in this way unabashedly because I am the writer, but not the author, of *Conversations with God.*

As I have told lecture audiences and retreat participants around the world, I put this material into written form, but I did not *create* the material. Not even the questions I asked were innocently and purely and originally mine. No, I can't even take credit for that. I am convinced now that it was God who inspired me to ask each question, at the time that I did and in the way that I did, so that the answers could be brought forward in just the right way at just the right time.

In short, this entire dialogue has been *directed.*

I believe that this dialogue emerged out of humanity's deep desire to be given God's vast truth in contemporary terms and times. The truth has been revealed before, of course, in ways that were attuned to those many earlier moments. So there is nothing new here, save the way in which this truth is shared. Yet that difference is not insignificant. It

has caused the Conversations with God material to be read by millions of people in thirty-seven languages.

Each era has its messengers. The message remains the same, but the method of delivery has varied. In this day and time the messengers are many. They are scattered all over the world. A close examination of what they are saying, however, will reveal the striking similarity in the message that they bring.

I have been told by many people that the CwG dialogues carry heavy Christian overtones. Others have said that the Buddhist philosophy can be seen everywhere. Still others have pointed to the obvious similarity of some CwG ideas to Jewish teachings. And I have received letters and e-mails from Muslims who say that they see their spiritual understandings reflected all over the place in this material.

None of this has surprised me in the least. People of many faiths and those belonging to no organized religion at all see themselves in *Conversations with God*—and it was intended to be so. The question now remains, What, then, will we do with all of this newly worded spiritual revelation? Will we make it a part of our lives, and use it to alter life as we are living it on this planet? Or will we place these books on the shelf alongside the other material that has ignited us in the moment, and to which we never pay attention again?

I, of course, am hoping that more will be done with it. And the fact that you have come to this companion has encouraged me greatly. And so you will understand if I ask a favor of you.

Don't stop here.

Completing the exercises and assignments presented here is a great step forward in the implementation of your decision to explore more deeply the application of the messages in *CwG* to your daily life. Now that you have embarked upon this joyous mission (and it *will* be joyous, as you will see in your life), you will be encouraged and inspired to know that the road continues onward. There is no reason to end this incredible journey here.

I said earlier that this entire dialogue has been directed. I am convinced of that. There are nine books in the Conversations with God cosmology, and each book moves the dialogue forward in striking ways, introducing new and startling information not covered in any of the previous ones. It is an advancing conversation, not a stagnant one, a constantly stimulating exchange that unceasingly challenges us to consider and continually invites

us to embrace bold and ever larger ideas about Who We Are, Who God Is, What Life Is About, and How Everything Works.

The remaining titles in the nine-book series are:

Friendship with God
Communion with God
The New Revelations
Tomorrow's God
What God Wants
and
Home with God in a Life That Never Ends

In addition to those three thousand-plus pages, there are several corollary books that explore the CwG messages from different angles. Among them . . .

Bringers of the Light
ReCreating Yourself
Happier Than God: Turn Ordinary Life into an Extraordinary Experience (2008)
and
When Everything Changes, Change Everything (2009)

I believe that you will find these last two titles to be essential reading if you are looking for insight and suggestions on how to place *CwG* "on the ground" in your 9-to-5 experience. The first of these two is a virtual tool box for those who wish to construct a new life using the principles of *Conversations with God* (particularly the idea that you create your own reality) as its foundation. The second is a set of remarkably clear recommendations for persons facing major changes in their lives (and who, as I noted in the Prologue, is not among them?).

Finally, I offer to you the considerable resources of the multifaceted and highly sophisticated website that has been created for those who wish to stay in really *close touch* with the energy of *Conversations with God,* making it a real and viable presence in their daily lives.

The site allows you to interact with me personally on a continuing basis through the Messenger's Circle—and to become a spiritual messenger yourself, offering help and guidance to others who come to the Life Support Center.

Also in the Circle you may take advantage of the Ask Neale section, in which you may ask me any question you wish about the material, join me for monthly telephone classes, peruse the *CwG Weekly Reader,* find wonderful electronic online courses to further your learning, listen to audio programs of a wide variety, watch video presentations, and connect with other CwG readers around the world who have formed a wonderful and caring community here.

And finally, you can learn at this website about The Change Process, which is to my mind the single most exciting result of the Conversations with God global outreach. The Change Process is found in the book *When Everything Changes, Change Everything,* and at our Internet site you will find a listing of dates and places for the powerful one-day events of the same name that I have created as a means of working individually with people who want to apply *CwG* in their lives *right now.*

For all of this and more, just go to www.nealedonaldwalsch.com.

(Through that portal you may also link to the Conversations with God Foundation, Humanity's Team, and The School of the New Spirituality—the other outreaches of this work.)

Thank you for being committed to personal and global change at such a high level. You must be, or you wouldn't have this book in your hands. If you ever wish to connect with me personally, I hope that you will do so through the website above.

I send you my love and my encouragement as you continue on your journey—and I accept yours.

Neale Donald Walsch
Ashland, Oregon
Christmas Eve, 2008

INDEX

A

accomplishment, 114–115
actions, 20
affirmations, 169–171
afterlife, 263
anticipated outcomes, 161
anxiety, 248
appearance of life change, 273
Armstrong, Neil, 11
assignments
  affirmations, 170–171
  beingness, 38, 164–165
  belief, 256
  communication, 57–58
  creation, 22–27
  energies, human, 64–65
  eternalism, 270
  fear, 42–44
  God, 51
  Godliness, 147
  Gods, 188–189
  happiness, 288
  health alternatives, 182–184
  human relationships, 112–114
  mastery, 93
  needs, 108
  New God, 206
  perfection, 263–264
  Process of Personal Creation and, 211
  promises, 134
  quality of life, improving, 73
  regret, 250–251
  soul, evolution of, 77

sponsoring thoughts, 30
suffering, 102
automatic reactions, 142
awareness, 214, 216

B

Baptist Church, 89
Be-Do-Have paradigm, 162
beingness, 36–38, 159–175
assignment, 38, 164–165
choice of, 13
concept of, 161–165
doingness and, 163
exercise, 36–37, 162–164
God's purpose, 36–37
self-definition and, 172–175
state of, achieving, 161
belief, 255–256
betrayal, 273–278
exercise, 274–275
God and, process of, 275–278
highest, 273
of self, 244, 273
Bible, 1
biological incident, 286
blasphemy, 2
bliss, 126
Buddhist, 89

C

Catholic Church, 89
cause-and-effect relationships, 178
changelessness, 74
changes, life. *See* life changes
choices, 96–97
co-creations, 179
Cole-Whittaker, Terry, 241
comfort zone, 221–222
communication, 1–44
assignment, 57–58
beingness and, state of, 36–38
concept of, 3–9, 56–58
creation and, 20–27
exercise, 5–6
existence and, physical, 31–35
feelings and, 9–19
with God, 3–5
methods of, 6–7
spiritual *vs.* practical, 6–9
sponsoring thoughts and, 28–31
concepts of *Conversations with God*
beingness, 36–38, 161–165
betrayal, 273–278
change, life, 71–73
communication, 3–9, 56–58
creation, 20–27, 82–84
desires, 165–171
energies, human, 60–65
existence, physical, 31–35
fear, 39–44, 248–251
feelings, 9–19
forgiveness, 259–264
framework of, xxvi–xxx
God, 48–51, 86–88
Godliness, 146–147
guilt, 248–251
happiness, 285–288
health, 179–184
highest thoughts, 65–70
humanity, 233–236

Law of Attraction, 208–211
life, 115–120, 284–285
messages, human, 127–134
motionlessness, 254–256
needs, 54–56, 105–108
passion, expectation of, 94–97
proportionality, 151–157
realism, 266–270
re-creation of self, 121–126
relationships, 110–114
resistance, 89–93
self-consciousness, 281–284
self-definition, 172–175
sexuality, 220–222
shame, 192–196
soul, evolution of, 74–77
spirituality, 214–217
sponsoring thoughts, 28–31
suffering, 100–102
thoughts, personal, 77–78
three paradigm-shifting, 159
transparency, 239–242
truth, 138–143, 199–202
Will of God, 205–206
wisdom, 224–229
condemnation, 50–51
afterlife and, 263
God's, 239
lack of, 50–51
conscious creation, 142
consciousness, 231–236
evolution of, 284
exercise, 283–284
self, concept of, 281–284
A Course in Miracles, 129, 167
creation
assignment, 22–27
conscious, 142
deeds, 20–21
deliberate, 71
exercise, 21–22
levels of, 20–27
personal, 207, 210
process of, 67–70, 82–84
promises and, 271–278
thoughts, 20–21
words, 20–21
creative thoughts, 82–84
Creator, 82
Cycle of Life, 269

D

data, 14
death, 265–270
realism and, concept of, 266–270
decision making, 14–19
exercise, 14–16
feelings and, listening to, 14
intuition and, 16–17
self-definition and, 173–175
deeds
creation, level of, 20–21
energy of, 60
Deity, 2, 55, 205
deliberate creation, 71
demands, 36
denial, 50
desires, 165–171
affirmations, 169–171

exercise, 167–169
happiness and, 54
devaluization, 228
Dichotomy, 204
Direct Revelation, 1, 2
divinity, 219–222
concept of, 216–217
creating, 219–222
perfection and, 199
sexuality and, 220–222
doingness, 163, 174

E

earth, 11
Einstein, Albert, 223
emotional response, 13
emotions *vs.* feelings, 11–14
empowerment, 106
energies, human, 60–65
assignment, 64–65
exercise, 61–64
energy in motion, 13
Energy of Attraction, 286
enough. *See* proportionality
eternalism, 268–270
exercises
beingness, 36–37, 162–164
betrayal, 274–275
change, life, 72
communication, 5–6
consciousness, 283–284
creation, 21–22
decision making, 14–16
desires, 167–169
energies, human, 61–64
existence, physical, 32
fear, 39–42, 248–249
feelings, 10–11
forgiveness, 259–262
God, 48–49
Godliness, 146–147
guilt, 248–249
health, 180–181
health alternatives, 182
highest thoughts, 65–66
humanity, 233–234
Law of Attraction, 209–210
life's purpose, 115–117
messages, human, 130–132
motionlessness, 255
needs, 54–55, 105
passion, expectation of, 94–95
proportionality, 152–154
realism, 268
re-creation of self, 121–125
relationships, 111
resistance, 90–92
self-definition, 173
sexuality, 221
shame, 192–195
soul, evolution of, 75–76
spirituality, 215–216
sponsoring thoughts, 29–30
suffering, 101
transparency, 240
truth, 139–141, 199–201
values, 155–157
Will of God, 205
wisdom, 226–228
existence, physical, 31–35

expectations, 93–97
experiences
  creative energies and, 60
  of life change, 273
experiments, 236
  choices, 97
  comfort zone, 222
  Law of Opposites, 34–35
  needs, 56
  practical *vs.* spiritual communication, 8–9
  radical teaching, 119–120
  unconscious self-creation, 142–143
  values, 157

F

factual truth, 11
false thoughts, 128
fear, 38–44, 248–251
  assignment, 42–44
  concept of, 39–44
  exercise, 39–42, 248–249
  of God, 38–39
  regret and, 249–251
  sponsoring thoughts, level of, 28–29
  of truth, 201–202
feelings, 9–19
  emotions *vs.*, 11–14
  exercise, 10–11
  listening to, decision making and, 14
  truth and, 9–19
forgiveness, 257–264
  concept of, 259–264
  exercise, 259–262
  perfection and, 263–264
free will, 36

G

Gift of Wisdom, 286
giving, selfless, 161
God, 47–58
  assignment, 51
  betrayal and process of, 275–278
  commands of (*See* God, commands of)
  communication with, 3–5, 56–58
  concept of, 48–51
  condemnation, 50–51
  defined, 47–58
  denial of, 50
  exercise, 48–49
  fear of, 38–39
  function of, 86
  needs of, 54–56
  process of, 275
  relationship with, 184–189
  shame and, 192
  state of beingness, purpose of, 36–37
  three-level aspect of, 59
  values and, beliefs of, 53
God, commands of, 85–97
  concept of, 86–88
  passion, expectation of, 94–97
  resistance, 89–93
Godliness, 146–147
  assignment, 147
  exercise, 146–147
Gods, 187–189
great polarity, 28
guilt, 248–251
  exercise, 248–249
  regret and, 249–251
  shame and, 248
gurus, 103–104

H

Happier Than God, 208, 209, 272, 286
happiness, 285–288
  assignment, 288
  desires and, 54
health, 177–189
  alternatives (*See* health alternatives)
  concept of, 179–184
  exercise, 180–181
health alternatives, 181
  assignment, 182–184
  exercise, 182
Hebrew Bible, 1
Hell, 50
highest betrayal, 273
highest thoughts, 65–70
  creation, process of, 67–70
  exercise, 65–66
Holy Scriptures, 2
holy triad, 59–78
  change, life, 71–73
  energies, human, 60–65
  highest thoughts, 65–70
  soul, evolution of, 74–77
  thoughts, personal, 77–78
Home with God in a Life That Never Ends, 231
humanity, 233–236
  exercise, 233–234
  separation and, 235–236
human relationships, 112–114

I

imagination, 223
inhumanity, 232
insanity, 232
intrinsic values, 154
intuition and decision making, 16–17

J

The Joy of Sex, 221
Joy of Wonder, 286
Judaism, 89
judgment, 248

K

Kennedy, Bobby, 188
Kennedy, John, 188
knowingness, 31
knowledge, 224
Koran, 1
Kübler-Ross, Elisabeth, 247–248

L

Law of Attraction, 208–211
  exercise, 209–210
  Process of Personal Creation and, 210–211
Law of Cause-and-Effect, 50
Law of Gravity, 50
Law of Opposites, 33–34, 286
  experiment, 34–35
  sponsoring thoughts and, 34–35
life
  basic questions of, 281
  fear of, 39
  principles of, 286
  process of, 284–285
  purpose of (*See* life's purpose)
  resolution of, 285

life changes, 71–73
  appearance of, 273
  exercise, 72
  experience of, 273
  quality of life, improving, 73
life's purpose, 115–120, xxviii
  changing, 73–77
  exercise, 115–117
  radical teaching and, 118–120
The Little Soul and the Earth, 227
The Little Soul and the Sun, 227
loss, ultimate, 238
love, 145–147
  Godliness and, 146–147
  sponsoring thoughts, level of, 28–29
  unconditional, 146–147

M

Master. *See* God
mastery, 92–93
  assignment, 93
mechanism of the Universe, 282
messages, human, 127–134
  exercise, 130–132
  promises and, 133–134
mindfulness, 215
money game. *See* proportionality
morality, 268
motionlessness, 254–256
  belief and, 255–256
  exercise, 255
movement, 272

N

need fulfillment, 133
needs, 54–56, 103–108
  assignment, 108
  concept of, 105–108
  empowerment and, 106
  exercise, 54–55, 105
  experiment, 56
New Age Protection Zone, 178
New God, 205–206
no-holds-barred sexuality, 219
non-separation, 239

O

objective truth, 11–12
obligations, 125
Old Books, 2
One Being. *See* God
One God. *See* God
outcomes, anticipated, 161

P

Parable of the Little Soul and the Sun, 33
Parable of the Rock, 253–254
partnership commitment statement, 133–134
passion, expectation of, 94–97
  choices, 96–97
  exercise, 94–95
  renunciation of, 93–94
Path to God, 88
perception, 276
perfection, 263–264

assignment, 263–264
defined, 199
personal creation, 207, 210
personal thoughts, 77–78
practical *vs.* spiritual communication, 6–9
prayer, 191–196
shame and, 192–196
thoughts and, 20
preferences, 54
Presence of Cycles, 286
Process of Personal Creation and, 210–211
promises
assignment, 134
betrayal and, 273–278
concept of, 133–134
creation and, 271–278
proportionality, 149–157
concept of, 151–157
exercise, 152–154
values and, 154–157

Q

quality of life, improving, 73

R

radical teaching, 118–120
rampant sexuality, 219
reactions, automatic, 142
realism, 253–256
concept of, 266–270
eternalism and, 268–270
exercise, 268
reality, 89
change, 276
ultimate, 205
Realm of Being, 269
Realm of Experiencing, 269
Realm of Knowing, 269
Realm of the Relative, 75, 109
re-creation of self, 121–126
exercise, 121–125
relationship obligations, 125–126
regret, 250–251
rejection, ultimate, 238
relationships, 109–134
accomplishment and, 114–115
cause-and-effect, 178
concept of, 110–114
exercise, 111
with God, 184–189
human, 112–114
life's purpose and, 115–120
messages, human, 127–134
obligations and, 125–126
partnership commitment statement, 133–134
principle of, 114
purpose of, 111
re-creation of self and, 121–126
relativity, 28
renunciation, 88–93
of passion, 93–94
resistance, 89–93
exercise, 90–92
mastery, 92–93
resolution of life, 285
response, 34
Road to Enlightenment, 88

S

self
  betrayal of, 244, 273
  definition of, 139
  denial of, 50
self-awareness, 281–282
self-centeredness, 114–120
self-consciousness, 279–288
  concept of, 281–284
  happiness and, 285–288
self-definition, 172–175
  decision making and, 173–175
  exercise, 173
self-discovery, 82–84
  creation and, 82–84
selfish act, 161
selfless act, 161–162
selfless giving, 161
separation, 235–236
Separation Pathology, 225
Separation Psychology, 225
Separation Theology, 225
sexual energy, 220–221
sexuality, 220–222
  comfort zone and, 221–222
  exercise, 221
  no-holds-barred, 219
  rampant, 219
  spiritual energy and, 220–222
  unbridled, 219
shame, 192–196
  exercise, 192–195
  God and, 192
  guilt and, 248
  prayer and, 195–196
soul, evolution of, 74–77
  assignment, 77
  exercise, 75–76
spiritual energy, 220–221
  sexuality and, 220–222
spiritual game, 105
spiritual gravity, 50
spirituality, 213–217
  concept of, 214–217
  Divinity and, 216–217
  exercise, 215–216
spiritual *vs.* practical communication, 6–9
sponsoring thoughts, 28–31
  assignment, 30
  exercise, 29–30
  fear, 28–29
  Law of Opposites and, 34–35
  love, 28–29
stability, 74
Stein, Gertrude, 81
suffering, 99–102
  assignment, 102
  concept of, 100–102
  exercise, 101
sun, 11
Sylvester (cartoon character), 99
Synergistic Energy eXchange, 220

T

Taoism, 89
Ten Commandments, 86
"Ten Point Path to Realization of Self as Creator," 82
theology, defined, 287

thoughts, 20–21, 77–78
creation, level of, 20–21
creative, 82–84
energy of, 60
false, 128
personal, 77–78
prayer and, 20
See also highest thoughts; sponsoring thoughts
Total Visibility, 237
transparency, 237–242
concept of, 239–242
exercise, 240
truth and, 241–242
Triune Being. *See* God
truth, 137–143, 199–202
concept of, 138–143
exercise, 139–141, 199–201
fear of, 201–202
feelings and, 9–19
reality of, 11
transparency and, 241–242
unconscious self-creation and, 142–143
wisdom and, 138

U

ultimate loss, 238
unbridled sexuality, 219
uncommon dialogue, 3
unconditional love, 146–147
unconscious self-creation, 142–143
unity, 237
unworthiness, 258

V

values, 154–155
and beliefs of God, 53
exercise, 155–157
experiment, 157
intrinsic, 154
purpose of, 51–56
wisdom and, 228–229
visibility, 237

W

Way to Nirvana, 88
Will of God, 203–206
concept of, 205–206
exercise, 205
New God and, 205–206
wisdom, 223–229
concept of, 224–229
exercise, 226–228
truth and, 138
values and, 228–229
Word of God, 2
words
creation, level of, 20–21
energy of, 60

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Neale Donald Walsch is the author of the *Conversations with God* series of books, six of which reached the *New York Times* non-fiction Bestsellers List. His life and work have helped to create a worldwide spiritual renaissance, with his writings translated into 37 languages and read by millions.

Since the publication of his first book, which remained on the *Times* list for more than two-and-a-half years, he has traveled globally to bring the inspiring and uplifting message of *Conversations with God* to people everywhere. He may be contacted directly through his personal website at:

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